ULEMA, SUFIS AND INTELLECTUALS

Mubarak Ali

THE ULEMA, SUFIS

and

INTELLECTUALS

Mubarak Ali

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To

Professor Razi Abidi

Preface

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Lahore
March 1996.

Mubarak Ali

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THE ULEMA

The Ulema as a Class

There is a wrong concept among the scholars as well as among the people that there is no priestly class in Islam like in other religions. This assumption is accepted by most people without examining the role of the ulema, the learned religious scholars, who formed their own separate and distinct class in Muslim society. How did this class develop and establish its importance and take the responsibility to interpret religion and guide the community?

In the early phase of every religion, its simple teachings do not require a priestly class. Every believer is able to understand the religion and faithfully follow it. The society becomes slowly and gradually complex after religion spreads in different directions, converts different nations, and absorbs their local beliefs, customs, and rituals. As human society moves from simplicity to complexity, new problems and new requirements change our way of life. Under these circumstances, religion has to change itself in order to respond to the new challenges positively or negatively and requires a class of religious scholars to readjust religion according to the change.

In every religion, the priestly class appeared only when the religion became complex. Its very complexity provided the opportunity to the priestly class to monopolise religious knowledge and interpret it.

The same process was followed in Islam. In the early period, the problems were not complicated and the simple teachings of Islam could be understood by every Muslim. Conquests and mass conversions of the people of the conqurered countries, transformed the Arab tribal society into a multiethnic and feudal society. Though these people embraced Islam they retained their own language and culture. The Umayyad and the Abbasid empires adopted a number of Byzantinian and Persian administrative traditions. Secular requirments extended so vastly that it became impossible to get religious sanction. Therefore, to solve the new problems, and to respond to the social and economic queries, a professional class of ulema emerged to guide the Muslim community.

They devoted their whole life to the study of the Quran, Tafsir, Hadith, and Fiqh, and after the completion of their religious education, were authorised to issue fatwas. Thus people turned towards these ulema whenever problems arose in the case of the marriage, divorce, inheritance, and such minor things as how to bathe, how to eat, and how to dress.

Muslim rulers appointed a Qazi, Mufti, and Sadr in the administration to handle religious problems. The influence of the ulema strengthened when the Turks, Persians, and non-Arabs founded their kingdoms. It was the class which was well versed in the Arabic language and the religious teaching could only be understood through Arabic; thus they became the custodians of religious knowledge and took the power to issue a fatwa on every issue and interpert the Tafsir and Hadith.

To study religion, the madaras were established throughout the Muslim world to teach religious subjects. These madaras produced the professional ulema who were categorised into two distinct classes. The higher educated ulema assumed the role of Qazi and Mufti while the less educated got the posts of Imam and Khatibs. The role of both categories was different. The first category handled the complex problems of social political, and economic life of the state and society; while the Imams and the latter category of ulema performed the rituals at the time of birth, marriage, and death.

In the Shia community, there is a hierarchy of Ulema: the Mujtahid, Ayatullah, Imam, and Faqih. Every class has its own specific duties and powers to interpret religion.

The ulema, in order to distinguish themselves from others, have their own style of beards, dress, and turbans. The very appearance of an alim indicates his belonging to a certain sect or group. Whenever people address them, the word maulvi, maulana, or mullah is added before their name. The ulema as a class, have such a dominance over the mind of the people that they turn to them for every issue. In most of the Urdu newspapers and magazines there is a column reserved for the fatwas. These fatwas at times create problems instead of solving them.

How Two Types of "Ulema" were Created?

In India, after the foundation of Muslim rule, the ulema compromised with the absolutist system of monarchy and strove, with the help of the state institutions, to deepen the roots of the orthodox society. On the other hand the government, in order to win their support and exploit their religious authority in legitimising their policies, appointed them to high posts and made them a part of the state system. The ulema and the religious scholars were especially assigned Jagirs known as the Madad-i-Maash, to provide them financial assistance. These favours made the ulema justify the deeds of the ruler and assure the Muslim community about the religious character of the state and government.

The decline of the Mughals affected their position as they lost their stipends and grants due to political chaos. It made a great number of the ulema jobless. Some of them tried their luck in the small Muslim states of Qudh, and some of them joined the East India Company as employees. Those who failed to get the jobs established the madrassas financed by donations. The acceptance of donations made them dependent upon the Muslim class of Jagirdars and Taallugadars as it was imposible to run these madrassas without the patronage of the Muslim nobility. The result was that the ulema protected their interests.

The Indians' defeat in 1857 consolidated British rule in India; but at the same time the European-educated Indians struggled to get more political rights from the government. As there was no political aurthority in the Muslim Community, the ulema filled the gap by their religious authority and assumed the role of guides. They organised religious educational institutions, such as Deoband, Firangi Mahall, Nadwat al-Ulema and Mazahir al-Ulema. This was followed by small groups of the different sects who also established the madrassas or religious foundations as a source of their aurthority and income.

There were two types of madrassas which flourished during this period. First, for the higher religious education; these madrassas produced the ulema well-versed in traditional Islamic education, competent to issue fatwas to guide the Muslim community in their problems according to the fiqah. The degree holders (Farigh al-Tahsil) ulema spread throughout India and occupied the positions of Imams and Khatibs and supervised the "Quran School" of the Mosque.

The second type was the mosque madrassas which taught only the basic teachings of Islam. These schools were attended only by the children of the poor families. The well-to-do Muslim families preferred to educate their children at home.

This divided the ulema into two categories: the highly educated upper class, and the less educated lower class. The first category of the ulema were financially sound as they had a regular income in the shape of salaries or donations. The second category, which depended on the generosity of the people, had a low status and were despised rather than respected. As they were accessible to the people, they were consulted on every religious issue by the poor and illiterate. Therefore, they retained their influence by delivering sermons every Friday, and the people listened to them reverently, most of the time without understanding.

Thus, these two classes of ulema played different roles. The upper class ulema, by associating with the nobility and the elite, supported the status quo; while the lower class ulema preformed the rituals on the occasions of birth, marriage, and death.

The upper class ulema remained cut off from the people and aligned themselves with the ruling classes and served their interests. The lower class ulema simply catered to the religious requirements of the poor people. Thus, both classes, by playing different roles, tried to maintain their importance in the Muslim community.

Clergy in Service of the Ruler

The ulema, to project their image in society, developed a historiography which eulogised their role in every age. As a result of such history writing, they emerged as champions of justice, truth, and freedom. As most such histories are written by ulema themselves, instead of research and investigation, they relied on faith and emotions and paid glowing tributes to their role in history.

One of the examples is Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, who was not a historian but a religious scholar and a great literary figure in Urdu language. In his famous book, "Tazkira", which is on the role of the ulema in the Indian sub-continent, he narrates their achievements in a highly floral language which simply reflects his love and devotion for the ulema. But as far as history is concerned, his description and opinions have no relevance to facts; on the other hand, his non-historical judgments have misled generations since the publication of the book.

For example, writing on the role of Ahmad Sirhadi, he writes that although there were a number of great religious scholars and prominent religious personalities and nobody dared to respond to the challenge of reform to revive the religion, Ahmad

Sihandi alone faced the challenge and fought bravely against the irreligious trends and defended Islam. In the same glowing terms, he paid tribute to Shah Walliullah whom he referred to as the King of the Time and the Alexander of determination.

According to Azad, Shah Walliullah revealed secrets known only to the selected persons of Delhi and spread them widely among the people. It means that he popularised the religion and created enthusiasm among the common man to defend the faith.

This style greatly influenced the thinking of the educated Muslim class, which after believing this version, did not bother to study the historical facts and anaylse them critically. Such writings developed a parallel historiography in opposition to the rulers and, by narrating the role of the ulema, proved that not only the Muslim rulers, but the ulema too protected and preserved the Muslim identity in India.

In writting such histories of the ulema, the writeres faced one problem, i.e., most of the ulema, as servants of the rulers, meekly obeyed their orders and justified their policies. These ulema were generous in issuing fatwas and condemning the misdeeds of their patrons. They cleverly exploited religion and gained personal benefits. Thus, to distinguish such ulema, they divided them into two categories: the worldly ulema; and the truthful ulema. The worldly ulema were the opportunists who twisted religion according to the requirements of the ruling classes while those ulema who fought for the cause of truth and justice, kept themselves aloof from the royal court and condemned the rulers on their irreligious acts, were the true ones.

However there was no consensus as to who was in the first category and who was in the second. Each group of the ulema accused that its opponents were worldly and betrayed the religious cause. Mutual accusation and condemnation, more or less, erased the division; and all ulema appeared as one group or class defending their own interests.

The ulema, throughout the course of history, sided with the ruling classes, barring individuals who raised their voice against the injustices and irreligious acts of the rulers. Mostly, the ulema compromised and, by issuing fatwas, advised the people to be obedient and submissive to the ruler.

Akbar and Ahmad Sirhindi

A group of modern hitorians, who interpreted history with an orthodox point of view, reconstructed the history of the subcontinent in such a way that the three ulema, i.e, Ahmad Sirhindi, Shah Walliullah and Sayyid Ahmad Shaheed emerged as the central figures around whom the whole process of history revolved.

Another characteristic of this history is that it was written in a rhythm of good and evil: on one side were the orthodox forces who were struggling to preserve the Muslim identity in the Indian subcontinent, while on other, the liberal forces were busy eliminating these three ulema who not only promoted the cause of the orthodoxy, but revived the religion. The role of these personalities is highly exaggerated and, in order to project their image, the facts are distorted and misused. For example, the disciples of Ahmad Sirhindi argued that it was he who saved Islam during Mughal rule, otherwise the atheistic trends were powerful enough to devour the religion. Because of his efforts, Jahangir decided to impose some of the religious practices which were discontinued by Akbar.

Aurangzeb's policy to implement the Sharia was shown as the logical consequence of his movement. Shaikh Ikran rightly observes that one sentence of Abul

Kalam Azad that Ahmad Sirhindi alone opposed the atheism of Akbar's time, misled the historians as well as common readers who interpreted history with this point of view. It also made Ahmad Sirhindi and Akbar rivals.

Akbar emerged as the Indian nationalist, tolerant of all religions, follower of rationalism, and a believer in the policy of Sulhi-Kul (peace for all). Contrary to Akbar, Ahmad Sirhindi represents orthodoxy, purity of religion, and supremacy of the Sharia. In the end, Ahmad Sirhindi's movement overpowered Akbar's reforms as Shah Jahan and Aurangzeb reverted to his policy. The defeat of Dara Shikoh signalled the death of liberalism and enlightenment at the court and the victory of the orthodoxy.

In order to make the role of Ahmad Sirhindi more effective, the period of Akbar is portrayed as the most abominable. He is declared to be an atheist, irreligious, and an enemy of Islam. It was argued that due to his policy the Hindus openly performed their religious rituals which was a shameful act under an Islamic government.

Manazir Ahasn Gilani, a religious scholar, wrote an article on Ahmad Sirhindi and Akbar and enumerated all the un-Islamic acts of the Emperor, for example, that he allowed the taking of interest, gambling and drinking of wine; forbade beards; changed the laws of marriage, disallowed bath after sexual intercourse, withdrew laws against illicit sexual relations and declared pigs and dogs more respectable than cows and buffaloes. His love of the Hindu religious books such as the Mahabhart is condemned and regarded as his conversion to Hinduism.

The main source of all his information is the Muntakhab al-Tawarikh by Abdul Qadir Badauni. How he distorted the facts and interpreted them, is evident when we read the original source. For example, Akbar introduced some rules and regulations regarding the drinking of wine. According to Badauni, he allowed wine when it was medically advised. He, however, never tolerated excessive drinking or creation of public disturbance after intoxication. Such cases were dealt with severely. As far as marriage laws were concerned, he fixed the age of the boy and girl at sixteen and fourteen respectively and discouraged child marriage.

Akbar favorued monogamy and disliked the practice of marrying more than once. He never allowed the practice of illicit sexual relations. According to Badauni, he founded a settlement of prostitutes outside the city and named it Shaitanpura (the place of Satan). There was a supervisor and a clerk who checked those who visited the prostitutes and registered their names.

Similarly, the religious reforms of Akbar were called Din-i- Ilahi and condemned as an attempt to replace Islam. This was done with an attempt to declare Akbar as the arch enemy of Islam. All his social, religious, and political reforms were declared un-Islamic. The logic behind this approach was more to condemn Akbar and to project the image of Ahmad Sirhindi.

However, it is proved by the evidence of contemporary sources that Ahmad Sirhindi was not well known at the time of Akbar's rule and had few disciples who were devoted to his person. He came into limelight during the period of Jahangir when his letters to his disciples became controversial and Jahangir was compelled to invite him to his court and, finding him arrogant, imprisoned him at the Gawalior Fort.

During the communal conflict between the Hindus and Muslims, he became relevant to the needs of Muslim separatists and was rediscoved by the communalist historians to support their views from his teachings.

This interpretation of history suits those who are against enlightenment and, by distorting the facts of history, want to establish the supremacy of the orthodoxy.

sufi villa!

Shah Waliullah's Mission

After Ahmad Sirhindi, Shah Waliullah is the second religious personality whose role is unduly emphasised in modern history. Was Shah Waliullah a prominent and well-known figure in his own time; and did he influence his contemporaries by his teaching? "Muhammad Ahmad Waliullah and His family", published in Lahore 1976, demolishes the myths of his greatness. He argues that during his life-time, his influence was limited to a small circle. As there was no printing press, his books were copied by scribes and circulated in limited numbers. Moreover, there is no reflection of Shah Waliullah's teaching in his own successors. Even in the syllabus of Deoband, no book of Shah Waliullah was prescribed.

Shah Waliullah, like Ahmad Sirhindi, is rediscovered in modern times to meet the requirements of certain sections of the Muslim society. Maulana Ubaidullah Sindhi is especially responsible for interpreting his thoughts according to the changing situation of the world. Maulana Sindhi was very much impressed by the results of the Russian Revolution of 1917 and championed the cause of socialism. But the atheistic aspect of socialism perturbed him and in order to Islamise socialism, he searched for some Muslim thinker whose thoughts could provide the basis of Islamic socialism.

In Shah Waliullah, he found some economic theories which could be interpreted in modern language and used to reconstruct Muslim society on modern and radical lines. His book, "The Political Movement of Shah Waliullah", is an attempt to synchronise his views with Marx and Lenin.

Following Maulana Sindhi, another religious scholar, Maulana Muhammad Mian in Vol. II of his book "The Glorious Part of the Indian Ulema", converted Shah Waliullah into a revolutionary who was controlling and guiding the popular movement expanding all over the subcontinent. Elaborating his point of view, he writes, "Shah Waliullah was in favour of armed revolution based on the principles of holy war. Such a revolution could not be successfully launched by professional soldiers, but by the volunteers who would have been especially trained for this purpose. Shah Waliullah established such training centres".

The author points out the centres which were at Delhi, Rai Braily, Najibabad, Lucknow, and Thattha. According to the author, Shah Waliullah first trained the Muslim ruler because, "for a successful revolution, those who ruled the country and had the confidence of the people, must be trained."

The question arises why Shah Waliullah failed to influence his own time and could not change the course of history, why were his thoughts revived, and why are attempts being made to make them relevent to modern times? Perhaps, the answer lies in the backwardness of Muslim society, which, after the fall of the Mughals, failed to produce any thinker, philospher, or intellectual who could respond to the challenges of modern times.

To fill this gap, Shah Waliullah was rediscovered, his books were re-assessed, and his thoughts were re-formulated in order to guide the Muslim community. Later on, he is related to a greater movement which was begun by Ahmad Sirhindi and was continued, even after Shah Waliullah, by his family members. This argument is carried on further by I.H. Qureshi, who paid glowing tributes to Shah Waliullah and his family for sponsoring and patronising the religious movement and keeping it alive, giving no chance to the East India Company to sabotage it.

After Ahmad Sirhindi and Shah Waliullah, the third important religious leader was Sayyid Ahmad. His Jihad movement is regarded by the orthodox historians as the continuity of Shah Waliullah's mission to revive Islam and implement the voluminous books on the life and works of Sayyid Ahmad Shaheed. Maulana Abul Hassan Nadwi and Ghulam Rasul Mehr, aruged that he fulfilled the mission of Shah Waliullah. I.H. Qureshi also testified to this view in his book, "The Muslim Community in the Indo-Pak Subcontinent" by writing that Shah Abdul Aziz, the grandson of Shah Waliullah, had groomed Sayyid Ahmad for the holy war. According to him, there are reasons to believe that he had done systematic planning. When he accomplished his ideals he, like others, had relied on the Pathan tribes of the NWFP.

Prejudice that Prevents Understanding of History

The ulema writing the history of the Freedom Movement, glorified the role of their predecessors and attributed all achievements and successes to them in order to discredit the secular leadership whom they dubbed opportunist. This interpretation of history reflects the ambitions of the present religious leadership which is ambitious to grasp the leadership of the Muslim community by ousting the secular and progressive elements. The role of the ulema in the past can help them to mobilise the people in their own favour.

The ulema who contributed to writing the history of the ulema are Abul Kalam Azad, Manazir Ahsan Gilani, Abul Ala Maududi, and Manzur Naumani. These religious scholars were not historians and their object was not to research and analyse facts, but to use history for achieving their own ends. Therefore, the writings of these ulema created a number of misunderstandings. As in Urdu, there is no scientific literature available on history, therefore their writings are the only source to those who have no access to the English material written by pofessional historians. Hence, these writings popularised their point of view, which is not only biased but ahistorical.

One of the characteristics of Urdu historiography is that more emphasis is placed on the beauty of language rather than on argument. Emotions rather than rationalism is the criterion. The result is that historical facts are lost in diction. Moreover, the writers used history for the propaganda of their religious views and therefore, distorted the history to justify their arguments.

Another defect of this historiography is that, mostly, these writers present a one-sided picture and completely ignore the other side. For example, Shaikh Ikran in his famous book "Rud-i-Kausar" Justifies the prejudicial attitude of Ahmad Sirhindi towards the Hindus by arguing that, as in his time there were revivalist movements among the Hindus, and they were becoming aggressive, it threatened the Muslims and, under these circumstances, Ahmad Sirhindi decided to humiliate them and suppress their aggressiveness. In his opinion, that was the background to why he was so anti-Hindu and intolerant towards their activities and repeatedly exhorted the rulers to curb the religious rituals of the Hindus.

The question arises: had the Hindus no right to revive their religion or observe their religious rituals? Strangely, the same writer praises those ulema who were engaged in the revivalist activities and worked for the implementation of the Shariah. Our historians also justify the demolition of the temples by Mahmud of Ghazna and Aurangzeb on the grounds that they were the centres of the conspiracies against the Muslims. Can we apply the same principles to our religious centres?

The result of such history writing is that we condemn Ram Raj or the rvivalist Hindu movement in

India, but support all attempts at Islamic revivalism in Pakistan. This not only reflects the immaturity of our historical consciousness but our prejudice and narrow-mindedness.

The tragedy is that the whole history of the Pakistan Movement is written on these lines. Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi and Shah Walliullah emerged as the champions of the Two-Nation Theory and clearly defined the roles of the Muslims and the Hindus in the sub-continent. They are praised because of their orthodoxy. Akbar is condemned because of his tolerance and his policy to allow the administration, which deprived the Muslims of an active role. In an Islamic state, only Muslims have the right to rule. Therefore, the inclusion of the Hindus was a violation of the Muslim political system.

Our textbooks, containing these views, contribute towards making the minds of the young generation narrow and orthodox. Having no knowledge of facts, they believe what is written in these books. The result is that history fails to teach them anything which is positive, enlightened and progressive; and without historical knowledge, we fail to understand present problems.

Religious Approach to Politics

The mission of the three ulema, Ahmad Sirhindi, Shah Waliullah and Sayyid Ahmad Shaheed was to purify Indian Islam from Hindu customs and restore the original form of early Islam. It was their belief that God had delegated this mission to them and therefore every action of theirs was inspired and guided by God. To achieve their ends, they legitimised their actions and openly condemned all those who opposed them. Ahmad Sirhindi called his extremism as Rag-i-Faruqi (view of Farooq, the second caliph). Shah Waliullah claimed that the Holy Prophet (PBUH) especially delegated him the higher religious status of Imam and Qutb (Pope). Sayyid Ahmad on his part also claimed to be the Imam and Mehdi.

However, the approach of these three religious leaders was different. Ahmad Sirhindi made attempts to convert the nobility as his disciples to implement the Shariah with their help. As in his time, the Mughal family was powerful, and the nobility was enjoying all privileges and there was no complaint against the political economic and social problems. Therefore his strategy was that, without changing the system, with the support of the state, to impose religious laws. He, writing a letter to a noble of Jahangir, explains his theory that the king was like a soul and the rest of the society was a body. If the soul remained healthy, it would keep the body sound. Therefore, to reform the king meant to reform the whole society.

It was the belief of Ahmad Sirhindi that all changes which occurred in religion distorted it and polluted its purity. Therefore, religion could be purified only by reviving original teachings.

Shah Waliullah adopted a different approach as a result of political change. In his time, the institution of the king had lost prestige and the nobility had become so corrupt and ineffective that there remained no hope to use them for the revival of political power and stability. The great threat to the Mughal empire was from the powers of the Marathas, Jats and Skihs. He openly criticised the king and the nobles and pointed out their weakness. Finding no hope in the capacity and potentiality of the Mughal nobles, he invited Ahmad Shah Abdali to crush the power of the Marathas. Instead of help, it proved disastrous to the Mughals, and the Muslims in general, and helped to create more chaos than stability.

Sayyid Ahmad faced quite a different situation. By then, the British had established their political domination and, after occupying Delhi in 1803, they made the Mughal king their puppet. The people, in general, after a long period of civil wars and choas, wanted to take a sigh of relief. As the British government did not interfere in their religions, Hindus and Muslims had no complaint against them. Therefore, there was no hope of inviting the people within the British Raj, so Shaheed decided to emphasise only the religious reforms in Northern India and chose NWFP for his political activities. To get recruits for his holy war, it was imperative to intensify the Muslim identity and to highlight the differences between Hindus and Muslims. As Islam was not in danger in the British territory, he accused the Sikhs of being enemies of the Muslims and urged the Muslims of India to fight against them and rescue their brethren from their clutches. His appeal worked and he got a substantial number of volunteers for his cause.

Ulema and Political Authority

One of the significant aspects of Muslim history is the changing role of the ulema in society. Their influence increased only when political authority declined. In the early phase of Muslim history, when the Umayyads and the Abbasids established their empires, the ulema, finding no role in empire-building, left politics alone and devoted themselves to religious studies.

Only in the declining period of the Abbasids, when the regional ruling dynasties emerged, the ulema became active in politics and aligned themselves with merchants and notables in order to advise them in matters of religion and administration. They also took an active part in missionary activities and converted people to Islam, which made them holy in the eyes of the new Muslims.

In 1958, when the Abbasid caliphate came to an end, it destroyed the political structure of the caliphate. To replace it, Muslim thinkers proposed different political systems in which ulema were assigned an important role to guide rulers. Since then, the ulema regarded it their responsibility to compel the state to implement Shariat and to warn rulers not to deviate from religious teachings.

However, in the case of strong rulers, the role of the ulema was minimised. A powerful ruler used to violate the Shariat and adopt policies which suited his interests; but when a weak ruler ascended the throne, influence of the ulema increased and they interfered in all matters of the state. Both aspects of the ulema's role are fully exposed in Indian history. For example, when the ulema demanded of Sultan Iltumish (2.1236) to kill all the Hindus as they were not Ahli-Kitab, he refused an dismissed them politely. Alauddin Khilji (d.1316) openly told Qazi Mughith that he cared only for the welfare of his subjects irrespective of whether it was according to the Shariat. Sultan Muhammad Tughluq (d.1315) was so powerful that he disregarded the ulema altogether. Only in the weak, Sultan Firuz Tughluq, (d.1388) did the ulema find patronage.

During the whole Mughal period, the ulema could not find any opportunity to assert their authority. Again, it was in the declining period of Aurangzeb that they got prominence.

There are reasons why during political stability, the uelma's role is undermined, and why in a period of decline their authority emerged. The explanation is that when a ruler was strong and had stable institutions, he did not require any extra group to legitimise his rule; therefore, he disregarded the authority of the ulema. Not only this, in some cases, he made attempts to check their power and bring them under his control. However, in the case of a weak ruler and during periods of political instability, the ruler needed their help in order to get religious support.

Moreover, during the period of political stability, the economic and social conditions of the people remained relatively good. They felt protected and secure; therefore, they had respect for political authority.

In periods of decline, people were left forlorn to face problems; so, in the absence of any political authority, people sought the help and advice of the ulema. In the case of India, the rise of the ulema took place when the Mughal empire had lost its political authority. The vacuum was filled by them. Thereafter they took the responsibility to guide the community.

After the partition (1947), the authority of political leadership which assumed power was recognised by the people; therefore, the ulema failed to find any place in the new structure. Political stability, in spite of change of political systems, somehow remained intact upto the crisis of Bangladesh in 1971. Thereafter, the deterioration of economic, social, and political conditions provided an opportunity for the ulema to take active part in politics challenge the political authority.

Bhutto's weak political leadership in the 1970s made the ulema aggressive. As Bhutto conceded their demands, they asserted their authority and forced Bhutto to come to terms with them. As Ziaul Haq had no constituency, he sought his legitimacy from the ulema and in return provided them all sorts of concessions and privileges.

Therefore, it is clear that in Pakistan, the ulema will remain active in politics as long as the political leadership is weak; and only during period of political stability will their role be curtailed.

Conflict between the Ulema and Bureaucrats

In the beginning of Muslim history, there was no priestly class of ulema, and those who ruled and administered were competent enough to give verdict and guide people according to the shariat without consultation with religious experts.

In the course of Muslim history, a class of the religiously devout people emerged who, disgusted by civil wars and bloodshed of the Muslims, turned towards religious studies. They kept themselves aloof from politics and guided the Muslim community to the right path. Thus, their domain of activities was religious and moral, and not political.

Throughout the Umayyid period (661-750), the ulema avoided politics in order not to come into conflict with the state. The Umayyids, on the other hand, retained the Arab tribal traditions and did not assume absolute power. As the Arabs dominated the non-Arabs, there were no deep-rooted grievances against the state. The Arabs enjoyed privileges at the cost of the non-Arabs and supported the Umayyid rule.

The situation was completely changed as a result of the Abbasid Revolution (749) which overthrew the Umayyid power and replaced it with the Abbasid dynasty. As the Abbasids came into power with the help of the Iranians, the influence of the Arabs was greatly reduced at the court. The Iranian bureaucrats soon controlled the whole administration.

The domination of the Iranians triggered a cultural war with the Arabs who, with the help of the ulema, tried to dislodge the Iranian officials from the court. This conflict brought the class of ulema into active life, who to counter the influence of the Iranian bureaucrats, made attempts to check the power and privileges of the caliph by proclaiming the supermacy of the shariat. In this way they hoped to make the ruler bound to the shariat and forced him to follow their interpretation of religion. Apparently, they fought for the supremacy of the shariat but in reality their intentions were to acquire political power in the garb of religion and to rule over the empire.

The Iranian bureaucrats, on the other hand, struggled to retain the newly acquired power by restoring the structure of the Sassanid Empire and by reviving the Old royal traditions and ceremonies of the court. They were interested to transform the Abbasid Caliph into an absolute emperor and then use him to further their own interests and to weaken the influence of the ulema.

Political conditions favoured them. The expansion of the empire, inclusion of new territories, and people of different religions and beliefs, administrative problems of the extensive empire, and new social and cultural issues, helped the caliph to wield absolute power and to adjust to new demands according to the interest of his person and dynasty.

The attempt of the ulema to restrict the power of the caliph and to bind him to the shariat failed. The Iranian bureaucrats made the caliph a replica of the Persian emperor holding absolute power. Those ulema who dared to defy the caliph, were severely punished, as was Imam Hanbal (d.855), who refused the official theory of the creation of the Quran. This process subdued them and consequently tamed them to issue religious injunctions (fatwas) to justify every act of the caliph.

Why were the ulema defeated and why were the caliph and Iranian bureaucrats successful? The answer is that the ulema had no power, except religious, to fight against their adversaries, whereas the caliph and his supporters had political power to crush their opponents. Besides this, the conflict was between two groups and the people were not involved in it. The ulema failed to get the support of the people because, due to political stability, people enjoyed peace and prosperity and were not interested in siding with any party.

However, the defeat of the ulema separated religion from politics. Deprived of political power, the ulema reverted to their religious studies and concentrated on the improvement of the moral and spiritual conditions of the society. Consequently, two parallel trends emerged in Muslim society: first, the political institutions and a cosmopolitan culture under state patronage, which tolerated religious minorities and included them in state structure, as most of the Christians and the Jews were active in the Dar al-Hikmat (house of wisdom) in translating Greek literature into Arabic; and absorbing the social and cultural values and traditions from the non-Arab socieites; the second was the narrow outlook of these ulema which confronted everything which was new and struggled to purify Islam. That was the beginning of the conflict between conservative and cosmopolitan forces in the history of Muslim society.

The Rising Power of the Ulema

Politically subdued and defeated, the ulema in medieval times continued their struggle to regain a prominent and dignified place in the society. The circumstances which helped them to extend their influence were the conquests by the Abbasids. These conquests opened new avenues for the ulema to convert the vanquished people. Among the converts they eanred great respect as religious scholars and men of piety.

As Arabic was not the mother tongue of the converted people, the Quran and the Hadith were beyond their understanding; theefore, to comprehend religious teachings, they required a competent authority to explain and interpret religious texts. This need helped in increasing the influence of the ulema. Soon they assumed the role of sole performers of all religious rituals, and thus, formed a distinct and separate class in society.

The rising influence of the four schools of jurisprudence, i.e., the Hanafi, the Shafa'i, the Maliki, and the Hanbali, further contributed to an increase in the need for ulema. Gradually, these four schools or "mazahib" established their hold in the Muslim world and every Muslim by birth had to follow one of these schools.

This led to the emergence of ulema belonging to these four schools of jurisprudence and the establishment of Dar al-Ifta (centre for religious consultations) in order to guide people in their social, cultural, and religious matters.

This process further separated religion and the state. The state collected taxes, administrated justice, and maintained law and order; while the ulema took care of religious studies and guided the people by issuing religious injunctions (fatwas) according to the school to which they adhered.

With the disintegration of the Abbasid caliphate and the establishment of independent provincial dynasities, the importance of the ulema was further consolidated. The new ruling dynasties needed religious legitimisation of their break from the caliphate and for their independent rule. To achieve this object, they integrated the ulema in the ruling class by appointing them in higher administratve offices. Thus, the ulema in the new set-up, assumed the jobs of tax collection, dispensation of justice, and functioned as police in order to maintain law and order.

These functions changed the status of the ulema and transformed them form a religious group to a social and political elite. Their high social status enabled them to have matrimonial alliances with the leading families of bureaucrats, landlords and the old nobility. Religious piety and political power made them very powerful and influential. Some of the leading families of the ulema ruled their own towns as governors and high officials.

However, integration with state institutions had great impact on the role of the ulema. Collaboration with the ruler and state ceased their relations with the people. They protected the interests of the state more than the interests of the people.

This is evident from their justifying every act of the ruler. As most of the rulers were non-Arabs, they legitimised their rule by tracing their lineage to the old Persian ruling dynasties, such as Achamaenians and Sassanians. They restored the old Persian court ceremonies and celebrated with pride the festival of Nauroz (spring). Their wine drinking and convivial parties were not only tolerated but justified by the ulema.

Though the ulema upgraded their status by acquiring wealth and power, it degraded them in the eyes of the public and they became the targets of sarcasm in public anecdotes and poetry.

Ulema and Revivalist Movements

Conquests and conversion brought new cultural traditions to the Muslim society and consequently this weakened the influence of Arab culture. Although the Iranians embraced Islam and became staunch Muslims, they strongly resisted Arab cultural supremacy to preseve their cultural values and traditions.

After the Abbasid Revolution, the Iranian nobility and intellectuals successfully integrated their cultures into the Islamic one and became a part of it. The emergence of the new Iranian ruling dynasties on the eve of the Abbasid diintegration further provided them a chance to promote Iranian culture under their patronage. Gradually, the Iranian culture spread in the Eastern part of the Muslim world. Arab culture lost its predominance and the Arabic language was relegated to religious studies.

The ruling classes also patronised the Iranian cultural institutions as these provided justification for their assumption of pomp and glory and enjoyment of a luxurious life. The Iranian court ceremonies and festivals made the court life lively and colourful.

However, the ulema were greatly concerned over the amalgamation of new cultural festivals and rituals; and the distancing of the ruling classes from religious teachings. They felt that it was their duty to combat irreligious activities and the integration of alien cultural values. Such a revivalist and reformist movement was first launched by Imam Hanbal (d:855), who is one of the founders of the Sunni system of jurisprudence.

He strongly condemned all innovation in Islam, especially the different interpretations of the Quran and the Hadith. As the Quran is the basic source of Islam, it should be studied with its textual meaning without any explanation. He further told the Muslims that all those Hadith which are authentic must be followed in toto. He himself collected such Hadith in his famous collection known as the "Musnad".

He outlined a system for the Mufti to issue fatwas following the Quran, the Hadith, and the judgements of the predecessors. They were not required to use their own intellect or judgement. It means that he closed the doors of Ijtehad.

Imam Hanbal was against all innovation because he believed that these new elements had polluted the religion . Therefore, Islam should be cleansed and revived in its old form. This campaign, as a matter of fact, was against the Iranian influence. Behind this facade was the question of political domination. He, by attacking the Iranian culture, wanted to weaken its political power and assert the supremacy of the Arabs.

He openly pleaded the case of the Arabs when he declared that only the Quresh were qualified to hold the office of the Caliphate. He appealed to the Muslims to take care of the rights of the Arabs and recognise their services to the cause of Islam. The Arabs should be loved and respected because only this could prevent the revival of the ancient Persian culture. Let not the non-

Arab civilisations overpower the Arab culture, was the message of Imam Hanbal.

Thus, the movement which was started by Imam Hanbal had no place in it for non-Arab civilisations. The result of this narrow approach was that his followers adopted an extremist attitude towards other cultures. To implement their own views, they coerced people into following them. In 229, the Hanbalis mobilised their followers to fight against those who rejected their teachings. There were riots and thousands of people were killed. Again in 935 there was an armed rebellion of the Hanbalis in Baghdad in which they burnt and plundered the shops.

This anger could be understood in the political background in which the Iranians deprived the Arabs of political power and undermined their culture. However, these attempts of the Hanbalis could not check the cosmopolitan trends which were active in Islamic society. They failed to appeal to the larger group to support them. It restricted them to a small sect unable to change the course of history.

This revivalist movement was resurrected by Imam Tammiya (d.1328) who, following Imam Hanbal, also condemned all interpretations of the Quran and Hadith and launched a campaign to purify Islam from the Shi'a, Mutazali, Ashari, and Islmaili beliefs. He criticised Greek philosophy and declared it a serious threat to Islam.

Ibn Tamiyya attacked the prevalent cult of shrine worship and unleashed his criticism against mystics who had misguided people from the right path.

He believed that only the ulema could rescue Muslims from all crises because they were 'the heirs to the Prophet's (peace be upon him) legacy. It was their duty not only to guide people but to admonish rulers. Thus, in his view, the ulema were more important for the Muslim society than rulers.

However, both movements failed to attract the majority of the people to their fold and were confined to minor groups. But the seeds of fundamentalism and revivalism which were sowed by them inspired the later movements to follow in their footsteps.

The Ulema in Iran

Shah Ismail (1501-1524), who laid the foundation of the Safavid dynasty in Iran, belonged to the Sufi order and was venerated by his followers as a holy man. As he declared Shiaism after assumption of power, he required the help of the Shia ulema to convert the Sunni majority of Iran into Shia faith and help him to consolidate his kingdom. He therefore, invited the Shia ulema from different parts of the Islamic world to fulfil his mission. Following his policy, al-Karki established religious schools (madrassas) in 1534 to train a corps of ulema to assist the state in maintaining its religious affairs.

The Safavids also adopted the policy of integration of the ulema into the state structure. The most important post was of the "sadr" who looked after the religious affairs and supervised the working of endowments. He granted lands to the ulema for their expenses. This type of grant was known as the "Suyurghul". It was hereditary and tax-free. This created a professional class of ulema who monopolised religious studies and preserved family privileges. As landlords, their relations with the state became very close and they joined hands with the nobility of the empire.

However, in the 17th century when the state weakened, the ulema gradually ceased to get benefits from the state. This led to their separation from the estate and the assertion of their own independence. They rejected the Imamate (spritual leadership) of the Safavids and argued that in the absence of the Imam, the ulema were his representatives. This made the position of the "Mujtahid" very important and he became the final authority in matters of religion.

There emerged two groups of ulema in Iran: Usuli and Akhbari. The usulis believed that in the changing circumstances "ijtihad" was essential; whereas the "akhbaris" rejected the principle of ijtihad and followed the traditions. This approach weakened their position and the "usulis" gained predominance. In the 19th century, the weak Qajar dynasty provided a chance to the ulema to assert their complete independence from state control. To get rid of state support, they appealed to the merchant class and wealthy people to support them. On the basis fo this financial help, they set up a chain of madaris and followed a policy of improving and supervising the morals of the people and the state.

The ulema were divided into a number of categories, but the highest rank was of the "mujtahid". Soon he became such a powerful figure that even the rulers feared to take any action against him. Sir John Molcolm, an envoy from British India who visited Iran in 1799, 1801, and 1808 gives interesting details of the status of the 'mujtahid" in his book, The Hisotry of Iran.

"There are seldom more than three or four priests of the diginity of the mujtahid in Persia. Their conduct is expected to be exemplary, without worldly bias; neither must they connect themselves with the king or officers of the government. They seldom depart from that character to which they owe their rank. The reason is obvious; the moment they deviate, the charm is broken which constitutes their power; men no longer solicit their advice or implore their protection; nor can they hope to see the monarch of the country courting popularity by walking to their humble dwellings, and placing them on the seat of honour when they condescend to visit his court. When a mujtahid dies, his successor is always a person of the most eminent rank in the ecclesiastical order; and, though he may be pointed out to the populace by others of the same class seeking him as an associate, it is rare to hear of any intrigues being employed to obtain this invisible diginity.

"The mujtahids of Persia exercise a great though undefined power over the courts of law, the judges of which constantly submit cases to their superior knowledge; and their sentence is deemed irrevocable ... The habitations of this high order of priesthood are deemed sanctuaries for the oppressed; and the hand of despotic power is sometimes taken off a city because the monarch will not offend a mujtahid who has chosen it for his residence but who refuses to dwell amid violence and injustice."

In 1890, when the monopoly of tobacco was granted to a British company by the ruler, the Mujtahid Mirza Ahsan Shirazi issued a fatwa declaring tobacco unlawful. The result was that the whole of Iran boycotted tobacco and even the servants of the king refused to serve him huqqa. The king had to cancel the contract.

After the Iranian Revolution, the ulema fully acquired political power and Imam Khomeini reordered the hierarchy of ulema in which the willat-i-fiqih is the highest rank. Imam Khomeini occupied this rank in his life and now Khamenei has succeeded him. Thus, the separation of politics and religion came to an end in Iran. The ulema are a part of state, though with a difference; instead of following the political leadership, they are dominating the state and dictating its policies. Whether this will lead Iran to a disaster or progress, only time will tell.

Ulema and the "Mirror of Princes"

The conflict between ulema and bureaucrats continued even after the success of the Iranians who revived the old Persian structure of the state and minimised the role of the ulema. Later political developments convinced the ulema that the absolutism of rulers could not be challenged; therefore, the only way open to them was to mould the character of a ruler and persuade him to implement the "sharia".

The Iranians already had this type of literature known as the "Mirror of Princes" which was translated in the 8th and 9th centuries into Arabic for the guidance of rulers. Ulema, following the model of the "Mirror of Princes" wrote a guideline for Muslim rulers, exhorting them to recognise the supremacy of the sharia and to abandon all un-Islamic court ceremonies and traditions.

The representative writing of this period is al-Mawardi's (d.1058) "Al-Ahkam al-Sultaniya" in which he outlines the duties of a Muslim ruler who must exercise his authority within the framework of the sharia. In his opinion only ulema could guide a ruler in implementing the sharia. Explaining the duties of a ruler, he writes.

1. He must protect religious sanctity. If any person expresses scepticism or introduces innovations in religion, he must be deterred either by argument

or by force. It is the responsibility of a ruler to keep the Muslim "ummah" on the right path and stop it from sinful acts.

2. If any conflict occurs between two groups of believers, it should be settled according to the sharia. Maintaining justice is the foremost duty of a ruler.
3. In implementing the sharia, he must prevent people from doing what is unlawful in religion.
4. In dealing with unbelievers, first, ask them to become Muslims; on their refusal, declare holy war against them. A Muslim ruler must establish the supremacy of Islam over other religions.
5. Taxes must be collected according to the sharia.
6. Scholarships and stipends should be granted to the ulema and needy people.
7. Honest and uncorrupt people should be appointed to high posts.

Besides al-Mawardi, Ghazali (d.1111) in his "Nasihat-al-Muluk" admires the ruler who implements the sharia, takes care of the ulema, and behaves with humility.

To counter this religious approach, a number of books were written to provide guidance to rulers to become ideal kings on the model of the old Persian king. The "Siyasat Nama" of the Saljuq wazir, Nizam al-Mulk (d.1092) and "Qabus Nama" of Kai Kaus (d.1082) are the best examples of this kind of literature.

Nizam al-Mulk, keeping in view the great quality of justice the Persian kings dispensed in order to rule, asks the rulers to be just and virtuous. In his opinion, maintaining a balance among the different classes of society is required for peace and properity. Especially, the privileges of the old nobility should be kept intact.

Nizak al-Mulk also advises the king on how to hold drinking parties for the public and for selected courtiers in order to provide access to all people. In the "Siyast Nama" the ruler is absolute and above the "sharia". He is not liable to follow the counsel of the ulema but the ulema must ratify his orders.

In the "Qabus Nama" there are instructions for a young prince. The whole training programme is based on the concept of Persian kingship.

The religious and secular trends which are reflected in both gneres of literature clearly show the conflict between the ulema and bureaucrats. Both wanted to control the state by transforming the rulers according to their ideals.

However, the ulema failed to convince the rulers to sacrifice their powers and privileges in exchange for the implementation of the sharia. Besides their own personal interests, they faced problems in following the sharia. For example, the sharia did not allow the non-Muslims to be appointed on key posts; but the state was in need of the services of Christians and Jews to run its administration. Therefore, whenever they encountered such problems, they conveniently ignored the sharia and kept supreme the interest of the state.

Ulema Under the Sultans of Delhi

During the Sultanate period, rulers, following the policy of the Central Asian kingdoms, integrated the ulema in the state structure and appointed them to the highest posts of "sadr al-Sadur" (head of religious affairs), "Qazi al-quzzat" (chief of judges), and "Shaikh al-Islam." In 1248, the post of the "sadr-i-jahan" was established whose duties were to look after the morals of people, maintain justice, persuade Muslims to say their regular prayers, check weights and measures in the market, and supervise religious endowments.

Sultans, ater paying "imams" and "Khatibs" of the mosques from the state treasury, kept them under state control. All teachers at mosques were also appointed by the state. To accommodate the well-known ulema, the rulers founded "madrassas" for them with generous financial grants. The result was that the ulema cooperated with the state and served the interests of the ruler rather than the people. For example, in the case of rebellion or insurrection against rulers, the ulema were used to pacify people. Or, if there were problems in the collection of taxes, again the ulema were asked to convince people to pay their duties.

The Sultans outwardly maintained good relations with the ulema, respected them publicly, attended their sermons, invited them to the court, took part in religious discussions, and awarded them precious gifts from time to time. However, they never allowed them to interfere in state matters. For example, when a delegation of the ulema asked Iltutmish (2111-1236) to treat Hindus as unbelievers and not as "zimmis" and further demanded that in case of their refusal they should be massacred, the sultan diplomatically handled the problem and told them that as the state did not have enough swords to kill all the Hindus, he would keep them in a state of humiliation.

Although Balban (1266-1287) behaved with the ulema respectfully, he restored the Iranian model of the court and traced his lineage to the legendary Persian king Afrasiyab. The ulema kept silent on all his un-Islamic state policies and praised him as the patron of religious scholars.

All the sultans, keeping the interest of the state in view, severely treated rebels and tortured them without any regard to religious sanction. Alauddin (1296-1316) openly said that to him the people's interest was more important than the "Sharia". Mohammad Tughlaq (1325-1351) was himself a religious scholar and therefore tried to use the ulema for the fulfillment of his schemes. Those who supported his policies were generously rewarded, whereas those who opposed him were either executed or imprisoned. To weaken the influence of such ulema, he exiled them to far off places on the pretext of preaching Islam. When he decided to make Deogir as his capital, he forced the leading ulema to go there. This provoked the wrath of the ulema and they supported the insurrections which took place against him.

However, generally, the ulema fully supported the state and in return demanded from the rulers the suppression all religious minorities which were against the Sunni orthodoxy. They also made attempts to counter the influence of the sufis and curb their activities. They openly criticised the sufis for violating the Sharia and indulging in acts which were, in their opinion, un-Islamic. For example, Nizam Al-Din Auliya, the famous Chishti saint, was asked to appear before a panel of ulema at the court and explain the "sama" (religious music) which was regarded by them as being against the Sharia.

The ulema of the Suri period (1540-1555) vehemently opposed the Mahdawi movement whose founder was Mohammad Mahdi Jaunpuri (d.1504). The sect became very popular during Islam Shah's rule due to the preaching of Shaikh Alai. Makhdum al-Mulk Abdullah Sultanpuri, a leading alim at the court, complained to the sultan against Shaikh Alai and got the royal permission to flog him. The flogging was so severe that the Shaikh died. Makhdom was also against Sheikh Mubarak, the father of Abul Fazl, who escaped his wrath after facing a lot of difficulties.

Thus, when the Mughals came to power, they found the ulema to be an integral part of the state; powerful and authoritative, to exploit state institutions in the name of religion to eliminate their rivals.

Akbar and the Ulema

At the time of his succession to the throne in 1556, Akbar was a religious man. He personally swept the mosque and said his prayers regularly. He had genuine respect for the ulema for their piety and religious knowledge and followed the instructions of Makhdum-al-Mulk Abdullah Sultanpuri and Shaikh Abdun al-Nabi-Sadr, the two influential ulema at his court. Both of them became so bold that they admonished . the emperor on his acts which they regarded as being against the Sharia. Akbar tolerated them with grace.

Shaikh Abdul Nabi was the sadr, which was one of the highest offices at the court. As a sadr, he was the highest legal authority and head of the judicial organisation. All qazis and muftis were under him. He was also incharge of endowment lands and stipends for educational purposes.

In the beginning, Akbar respected him and used to visit his house to attend his lectures on the Hadith. The high post, influence at the court, the devotion of the young emperor, and unlimited authority, made him proud and arrogant. He behaved towards people with utter contempt. Badauni, a contemporary historian, writes about him.

"And when the Shaikh in all his pride and haughtiness, took his place upon his official seat, and the influential amirs introduced to him a scientific or pious man, the Shaikh used to receive him in his famous manner, coming forward and paying respect to none".

The rudeness of the Shaikh became more evident when Akbar asked the ulema who held the Madad-i-Ma'ash jagirs to come to the office of the sadr and verify their grants. The Shaikh found an opportunity to show his authority and importance. Again, Badauni vividly depicts the scene.

"Then after midday prayers, he sat down on his throne of pride and washed his hands and feet, he took care to throw the water, which he had used, on the heads and faces and garments of the amirs, and courtiers of high degree."

Besides this humiliation, the applicants had to bribe the staff of the Shaikh. To get their work done, Badauni writes, "they had to bribe Sayyid Abdur Rasul, the Shaikh's headman, or to give a gift to his chamberlians, door keepers, and sweepers."

The second influential alim at the court was Makhdum al-Mulk who gained his reputation during the Suri period as a religious scholar and continued the same high status at the Mughal court.

He was an extremist in his religious beliefs and tortured his opponents to the extent that some of them died. His fatwas indicate more of his interest in worldliness than piety. For example, he issued a fatwa that to go to the pilgrimage was no longer binding because the land route was controlled by the heretic Shias of Iran and the sea route by the Portuguese.

To avoid Zakat, He invented a device. At the end of the year he transferred all his property to his wife and thus, legally escaped from payment of Zakat.

He amassed wealth and left three crore in cash after his death. Akbar sent Qazi Ali to assess the value of his property. He found ingots of gold buried in the graves of his house. All of his gold and books were confiscated by the state.

Moreover, there were rivalries, intrigues, and accusations against each other on petty matters. All such differences appeared on the surface when Akbar founded his Ibadat Khana.

Akbar and his "Ibadatkhana"

In 1574, Akbar laid down the foundation of the Ibadatkhana (house of worship) in order to know more about religion. At that time, Akbar was a devout Muslim and had great respect for the ulema and mystics; so much so that several times he visited the tomb of Mu'inuddin Chishti on foot; and sent one of his pregnant wives to another mystic Shaikh Saleem Chishti for his blessing and, after the birth of his son, showed his devotion for the Shaikh. His love of the Shaikh went to the extent that he built the town of Fatehpur Sikri near the saint's residence and made it his capital for some time.

In the beginning, only selected ulema were invited to the Ibadatkhana. And whenever Akbar wanted to see the scholarship and piety of any religious scholar, he was immediately invited to the Ibadatkhana where Akbar personally welcomed him on his arrival. However, the gathering of so many ulema in one place started to cause problems. First, they quarrelled on the seating arrangement. To solve it, Akbar took the arrangement in his own hands and allotted the seats according to categories: the courtiers used to sit in the east: the Sayyids on the south; and the Shaikhs on the north.

During discussions, the emperor visited each group and took part in all deliberations and awarded each party cash and gifts.

However, slowly the atmosphere of the Ibadatkhana started to change and the ulema crossed all bounds of seriousness and humility. According to Badauni: "The neck of the ulema of the age swelled up, and a horrid noise and confusion ensued". Akbar was so disgusted by their behaviour that he asked Badauni: "In the future report of any of the ulema who talks nonsense and cannot behave himself, I shall make him leave the hall". On this he replied, "If I carried out this order, most of the ulema would have to leave."

Later on, jurisprudential differences involved the ulema in bitter quarrels. One of the issues which disturbed Akbar was the legality on more than four wives. Akbar had already taken more than four wives and some of them were Rajput princesses. If the rest of the wives were not legal, the children were also not legal, but were illegitimate. How could Akbar and the proud Rajputs tolerate it? Akbar accused Shaikh Abdunnabi who told him that one of the Mujtahids had nine wives and therefore did not obejct to his marrying more than four wives. He wanted to legalise all his marriages and asked the ulema to find some legal way. In response, the ulema gave different interpretations: some referred to the verse of the Holy Quran: "Marry whatever women you like, two and two, and three and three, and four and four." Which was interpreted as : 2+2+3+3+4+4+ = 18 or 2+3+4 = 9.

During the discussion, Badauni, who was also a religious scholar, suggested to the king to appoint a qazi of the Maliki Fiqh and asked him to issue a fatwa legalising the muta' marriage. Akbar immediately appointed Qazi Hussain Arab Maliki as a qazi, who on the spot issued the fatwa declaring muta' marriage legal. Akbar, however, after getting this fatwa, dismissed the qazi lest others follow his example.

Religious discussions involved Akbar's interest more and more and he started to spend most of his time in the Ibadatkhana. This provided him the chance to observe the behaviour and attitude of the ulema. Badauni who was an eyewitness to these discussions writes: "The learned men used to draw the sword of the tongue on the battlefield of mental contradiction and opposition, and antagonism of the sects reached such a pitch that they would call one antoher fools and heretics."

The two great religious scholars at the court, Makhudum al-Mulk and Abdunnabi accused each other of being kafir (heretic). Makhdum severely criticised Abdunnabi who got Khizr Khan Sharwani murdered on the charge of Gustakhi-i-Rasul (disrespect) for the Holy Prophet (PBUH) and Mir Habsh on being a "Shia" while both charges were concocted.

This divided the ulema into two groups and each group tried to humiliate the other. Akbar was disgusted by watching the ulema fighting, abusing, cursing, and accusing each other. He therefore lost all respect for them.

Downfall of the Ulema

Religious discussions in the Ibadatkhana further disappointed Akbar when the ulema differed with each other on every issue. Badauni lucidly depicts the scene: "The differences among the ulema, of whom one would pronounce a thing as unlawful and another, by some process of argument would pronounce the very same thing lawful, became to His Majety a cause of unbelief".

When Akbar asked Qazi Jal and other ulema to write a commentary on the Quran, they differed with each other on every point. Akbar failed to understand why there was no consensus; and if there were so many points of view, where was the truth?

His skepticism further grew when a Shia scholar Mullah Muhammad Yizdi interpreted the early history of Islam with a Shia point of view. It created interest in Akbar and he attentively listened to the primary sources on Islamic history which further exposed the differences of the early Muslims in such a way that his faith was greatly shaken.

In 1579, an event turned Akbar completely against the ulema. It so happened that the qazi of Mathura complained that a Brahman had taken the construction material of a mosque. When he was asked to give it back, he reviled the Holy Prophet (PBUH).

Shaikh Abdunnabi, as a sadr, called the Brahman to the court; he did not comply with the order. To investigate the matter, Akbar sent Abul Fazal and Raja Birbal to Mathura.

They found the Brahman guilty. So, the Brahman was taken prisoner and was brought to the court. On the punishment of his crime, there were different opinions among the ulema: some were in favour of a death sentence, while some suggested flogging. Akbar personally wanted to save the life of the Brahman, but Shaikh Abdunnabi executed him. This clearly exposed the power of the ulema and the helplessness of the emperor.

Akbar's Hindu wives and his courtiers all criticised the ulema: that they had cossed the limit of their authority. Later on, when Akbar asked the ulema in the Ibadatkhana whether the punishment was according to the Shariat, the majority opposed the judgement of Abdunnabi. Now, Akbar realized that in order to assert his authority, he had to curb the power of the ulema. Moreover, he had also reached the conclusion that the ulema were a great hindrance to his policy of religious tolerance.

How to reduce the influence of the ulema? Akbar explained his position to Sheikh Mubarak, father of Abul Fazal, and asked him: "My dear teacher, then why don't you set me free from the meshes of these Mullahs? The Sheikh replied:" Claim to be the highest Mujtahid and ask them to sign a document to confirm it."

Following his advice, Akbar asked him to prepare the document. It was presented to all the ulema who were asked to sign it. Makhdum al-Mulk, Abdunnabi and all the ulema put their signatures to make the document valid. Now, Akbar had the authority of Ijtihad and did not need to consult the ulema. Thus, this document ended the power of the ulema; and the emperor, as the Mujtahid had authority to decide.

There ensued a competition among the ulema to gain the favour of the emperor. Some declared him Mahdi and Sahib-i-Zaman (Lord of the Age). Sharif Amuli proved from an old manuscript that in 900 A.H. a man would appear who would wipe out all evils. Khwaja Maulana Shirazi brought a pamphlet written by some Sharif of Makkah which predicated the coming of the Mahdi. Shaikh Taj al-Din justified the sijda (prostration) to the emperor on the grounds that the emperor was Ka'ba-i-Muradat (sanctum of desire) and Qibla-o-Hujat (goal of necessities).

The ulema at the court caved in to the extent that, to please Akbar, some of them openly drank wine and stooped down low to win the favour of the emperor.

Akbar's Final solution

There was some discontent among Akbar's ulema. Both Makhdum al-Mulk, and Abdunnabi complained that their signatures on the decree were taken under duress. They were not happy after losing their authority. The first fatwa against Akbar was isued by Mullah Yizdi, the Qazi of Jaunpur; and later on it was followed by some other ulema.

At this stage, Akbar decided to settle the issue permanently and root out the ulema's influence from the affairs of state. To accomplish this, he adopted three methods.

First, he ordered the arrest of those ulema who issued fatwas and urged people to rebel against him. Some of these ulema were secretly killed under his orders. Mahkdum al-Mulk and Shaikh Abdunnabi were asked to go to Hijaz for pilgrimage and stay there until they were asked to return. However, when both of them heard about sporadic rebellions against Akbar, they came back without royal permission. Akbar was angry and when Abdunnabi came to Fatehpur, on meeting him the emperor spoke rudely and struck him. To settle the account of rupees 7000 which he got for his journey to Hijaz, he was imprisoned and later strangled. Mukhadum al-Mulk also faced the same fate.

Second, the ulema of the Punjab, who opposed him, were exiled and scattered throughout India in order to uproot them and break their influence.

Third, Akbar called all the well-known ulema to the court and personally interviewed them individually. Those ulema who assured him of their support and declared their loyaltly, were granted Madad-i-Maash lands in exchange. Similarly, Akbar retained only those ulema in service who were loyal to him. He allowed them to retain their religious views as they liked; but did not allow them to interfere in matters of the state and oppose his policies. These settlements worked successfully during the period of Akbar.

Lastly, he decided to consult the intellectuals and not ulema on important issues. Hakim Abdul Fath, Hakim Haman, Hakim Ali, Hakim Ain al-Mulah, Shaikh Faizi and above all Abul Fazl, became his advisors. They counselled him in the affairs of the state.

Similarly, Akbar also appointed liberal and enlightened people in the big cities of the empire to supervise the conduct of the Qazis, Sadars, and Muftis, to keep watch on their conduct and not allow them to go beyond their duties.

The significant impact of Akbar's policy was that he uprooted the power and influence of the ulema and completely ousted them from the state structure. After that, they simply followed the instructions of the emperor and never asserted their independence. This allowed Akbar to pursue a liberal and secular policy without any religious interference.

Moreover, with the downfall of the ulema, the propaganda against Akbar, which was initiated by them, came to an end. The result was that Mughal rule was consolidated on the basis of secularism, tolerance, and pluralism, which gave it a long life.

Aurangzeb and the Ulema

Akbar completely controlled the ulema, successfully curbed their power and authority, and reduced them to mere employees of the state. His policy was followed by his two successors, Jahangir and Shahjahan, who retained the power of the king and kept the ulema away from politics.

However, the situation changed when Aurangzeb came to power after fighting a bloody civil war. He needed legitimacy of rule and wanted to eliminate his rivals. Therefore, he sought the help of the ulema and to please them, incorporated them again into the state structure.

The most formidable rival to Aurangzeb was Dara Shikoh who was defeated and arrested. To mobilise the people in his favour, a soldier, known as Haibat Khan organised a demonstration in favour of Dara Shikoh. This alarmed Aurangzeb. Haibat Khan was arrested and the emperor asked the ulema to issue a fatwa against him. The order was promptly complied with and Haibat Khan was executed.

The next victim was Dara Shikoh. He was condemned by the ulema as an atheist and anti-Shariat. On these charges he was also executed and his dead body was taken around the city for publicity.

Murad, the younger broher of Aurabzeb was the third victim. When Aurangzeb decided to eliminate him, he encouraged the sons of Ali Naqi, who was killed on the orders of Murad, to sue to the qazi's court and demand his blood. The charge was proved and Murad was immediately executed.

Similarly, Aurangzeb found no difficulty in getting a fatwa against Sarmad, a mystic and a friend of Dara, who was assasinated on charges of violating the Shariat.

On the other hand, the ulema, by helping Aurangzeb, fully used the newly acquired political power for furthering their interests; and soon they became notorious for amassing wealth through embezzlement, bribery, and extortion. The chief qazi of Aurangzeb, Abdul Wahab was known for his greed of wealth. When he died he left two lakh ashrafis and twenty-five lakh rupees in cash besides costly diamonds and jewellery. Khafi Khan, one of the contemporary historians, writes that the chief qazi had such unlimited power that even the most influential nobles feared his wrath and trembled in his presence.

The result was that having become involved in worldly affairs and corruption, the ulema lost their integrity and became a tool in the hands of the emperor who used them for his political ends.

Later on, realising the impotence and incapability of the ulema, Aurangzeb decided to prepare a comprehensive book on Islamic jurisprudence. The "Fiqh-i-Alamgiri" was compiled by the leading ulema of the time with the aim to include all social, political, and economic problems of Muslim society. Aurangzeb was satisfied and announced that the book would free Muslims from the consultation of the ulema.

Although Aurangzeb tried to Islamise the structure of the state and took steps towards this direction to by banning what he regarded un-Islamic and anti-Shariat, such as prohibition of wine, music, gambling; imposition of Jizya; and banning of the pilgrimage of the Hindus to their sacred places; the induction of ulema in the state structure and their appointment to all important posts in the department of justice; yet all his efforts of Islamisation could not prevent the decline of the state.

Aurangzeb used the ulema for the consolidation of his power, but their inclusion in the affairs of the state proved disastrous. Instead of solving the problems they created chaos and contributed in accelerating the process of Mughal decline.

Ulema in the Colonial Milieu

The defeat of the secular and political powers at the hands of the British colonialists left a vacuum leadership in India which was filled by the ulema who undertook the task of preserving the identity of the Muslim community in the Indian subcontinent. Their first response was to reform and purify Islam from Hindu practices. Therefore, the early movements tried to disintegrate the Muslims from the Hindus and reject the composite culture. Consequently, instead of fighting the growing influence of colonialism, the reformist ulema declared a holy war against local Indian customs which in their opinion polluted Islam. The attempts at purification further led them physically to clash with the Hindus.

The Faraizi movement in East Bengal is an example of such reformist movements. It was founded by Haji Shariatullah (d.1840) who preached among the illiterate peasants and asked them to adhere to obligatory duties of Islam. Soon his message became popular as the peasants were victims of the landlords and needed some way to improve their condition. Haji Shariatullah created a new spirit by organizing them into a close-knit association. To distinguish them from others, he proposed a special dress for his followers. He set up a parallel organization known as the Khilafat; and appointed his deputies or Khalifas in each unit. Village courts were established in order to settle local disuptes and prevent Muslims from going to British courts. To win the support of the peasants, he declared land tax illegal.

After his death, under the leadership of his son Dudu Mian (d.1862) the movement lost its militant posture and became religious. The significance of the Faraizi movement was that though it originated in a colonial milieu, it failed to challenge the colonial power and concentrated more on internal problems of purification and creating the consciousness of a Muslim identity. It divided the Hindu-Muslim communities which, resultantly, helped the British to consolidate their power.

A similar movement was started in West Bengal by Titu Mir (d.1831), a disciple of Sayyid Ahmad Shaheed (d.1831) who won the support of the Muslim peasants exploited by Hindu landlords. To create a separate sense of identity, he also followed the same methods which were used by Haji Shariatullah and recommended to his flowwers to wear a special dress and distinguish themselves from the Hindus. The movement soon came into conflict with Hindu landlords and was crushed with the help of British force.

The third militant movement was that of Sayyid Ahmad Shaheed which started from northern India and ended in the NWFP fighting against the Sikhs and the Pathans.

All three movements were reformist as well as militant. By launching the movement of purification, they not only divided the Muslim community, but made the Hindus, rather than the British, their enemy. The religious leaders failed to understand the real strength of the Muslim community, the deep-rootedness of the composite culture, and the growing power of the British with the collaboration of the Indian ruling classes. The failure of these three movements and the events of 1857 ended all hopes of the Muslims to grasp political power with the help of military force.

After 1857, the nature and character of the reformist movements changed and, instead of resistance and militancy, they concentrated on education. The foundation of Deoband was meant to reform the religion by reviving and imparting religious education.

However, there was a strong response against these reformist movements by Ahmad Raza Khan (d.1921) who defended popular Islam, and its customs, rituals, festivals and celebrations. He idealized the personality of the Holy Prophet (PBUH) and showed high reverence to the Sayyids. He believed in the mediation powers of saints and defended the celebration of their Urs, and pilgrimage to their tombs. He condemned the reformists' efforts to eliminate these popular practices and made efforts to preserve Islam as it had evolved upto that time. Moreover, he remained aloof from politics and attempted to keep the religious spirit alive among the people.

The teachings of Deoband attracted the urban middle class educated Muslims, while the Brailwis appealed to the illiterates and rural population. However, the result of their religious preachings was that every social and political issue was interpreted through religion and efforts were made to check the process of modernisation. The widespread religious conflicts became an obstacle in the unity of Muslims to fight against colonialism. They used their energies in declaring each other Kafirs (unbelievers) and downgrading themelves in the eyes of the people.

The questions arise as to why did these religious parties and groups call each other Kafirs? The reason was that each party wanted to keep its followers attached to it and to create a separate identity to keep them away from other rival groups; therefore, they exhorted their followers to shun all social relations with other groups; not to salute them, not to eat with them and not to have any matrimonial alliances with them.

Interestingly, each group claimed to represent the majority and therefore any attempt from any other group to weaken their position was tantamount to a great sin and act of hostility towards Islam.

After the disappearance of the Mughal empire, when there was no political power to unite the Muslims, the ulema filled the vacuum of leadership and each religious group tried to unite the Muslims to face the challenges of modernisation. To achieve unity each group attempted to win more followers and weaken the rival parties. Believing themselves correct and rightly-guided, each group strove to eliminate the other and unite all Muslims on the basis of their beliefs. Therefore, in the eyes of each, the rivals were a hindrance to Muslim unity and consequently great enemies of Islam.

The other reason why these religious parties adopted such hostile attitudes towards each other was that they relied on public funds and the desertion of thier followers to other groups could become a cause for their financial weakness. This forced them to adopt an uncompromising attitude and they rejected all reconciliation.

To propagate their beliefs; nearly all religious groups established their madaras to prepare hard core students and teachers. The famous madrassa which represented different trends besides Frangi Mahal, were Deoband (1860); Nadwat al-Ulema (1890); and Manzir al-Islam (1904). There followed a number of madaras in Lahore, Muradabad, Rampur, Badayun, Bareli, Marharah, Patna, Jabalpur, Karachi and Calcutta. Some of the famous madaras were Sham al-Ulema, Madrassa Irshadiya, Madrassa al-Hadith, Madrassa Hanafiya, Jamaiya Naimiyya, etc. All these madaras were supported by Muslim notables, feudals and the merchant class.

There was a great impact on the attitude of ulema as a result of public subscription. As most of the funds were provided by the rich and well-to-do Muslims, the ulema refrained from talking of social issues, such as poverty, hunger, injustice and sufferings of the poor. On the other hand, they supported the status quo and opposed any change.

The reliance on public subscriptions reduced their social status. Though they were feared, they were not respected by the people.

Shah Abdul Aziz and Colonialism

With the establishment of the political power of the East India Company, the Muslim community was confronted with new political problems which required them to re-adjust their relations with the Hindus and the English. The community, in the absence of any other power, turned towards the ulema for guidance. The response of the ulema, under these circumstances, was different; for example, some declared India as Daral-Harab; but some tried to understand the problem and exhorted their fellow Muslims not to migrate as long as they had religious freedom in India. Some ulema, however, migrated to Hijaz in order to avoid any relations with the British power; and some preferred to reside at the courts of the native Muslim states rather than to stay in British territory.

For rest of the Muslims the solution was not easy. It was well nigh impossible to migrate from India. Militarily, they were defeated repeatedly and there was no hope to oust the Birtish. The disintegration of the Mughal Empire reduced the chances for employment. The Hindus as well as Muslims were forced to seek employment at the courts of different rulers irrespective of their religion. The ulema were concerned about the situation because Muslim soldiers as employees of the

Hindu Rajas had to fight against their co-religionists. Therefore, Shah Abdul Aziz of Delhi issued a number of fatwas keeping in view the political, social and economic conditions.

He allowed the Muslims to serve the infidels in all capacities except as soldiers to fight against Muslims. Once employed by non-Muslims, he advised them to obey and respect their masters. However, he was not in favour of having social and cultural relations with them. According to him, the use of articles which were related to infidels was not lawful. If somebody wanted to eat and drink from the utensils of the Hindus, he must first clean and wash them. Similarly, he did not allow the Muslims to associate with the Hindus, to take part in their festivals, or to participate in their worship.

Shah Abdul Aziz not only permitted the Muslims to serve the East India Company, he also allowed one of his nephews, Abdul Haiy, to accept a position in the Company. Hearing this news, Shah Ghulam Ali, a leading mystic of the period, condemned it. Shah Abdul Aziz, in his reply, justified his nephew's service to the Company on the grounds that he would promote shariat working there in the capacity of a Mufti. He writes: "The service under discussion does not present obstacles such as association with infidels and their ceremonies, flattering them, telling lies or betraying Islam."

He allowed Muslims to learn English but with the condition not to learn it with the intention of flattering the Englishmen and gaining their favour.

However, the general response of the Muslims was not to associate with the English and not to imitate their dress, customs, way of life; and not to have close friendships with them. There were many instances when people washed their hands after a shake-hand with a European. Muslims who had social contacts with Europeans were generally looked down upon. It is said that Mohsin al-Mulk was shocked to find Sir Sayyid eating with a fork and knife.

Actually, Sir Sayyid undertook the task to introduce British customs to the Muslims and wrote a series of articles in his magazine Tahzib al-Akhlaq on eating with the people of the Book and on different European manners. His articles and the arguments that he put forward dispelled most of the misgivings of the Muslims and gradually their elite class adopted European culture as a way of life.

However, it is certain that the ulema failed to understand the nature and character of colonialism and how to respond to the challenges created by the new social changes. It was the result of their failure that the European educated class assumed the leadership of the Muslim community.

The Jihad Movement

The founder of the Jihad movement, Sayyid Ahmad Shaheed, was born in 1786 at Bareli. At the age of eighteen, he became a soldier in the army of a military adventurer, Amir Khan. He left his job when Amir Khan made peace with the British in 1817 and became the Nawab of Tonk. Sayyid Ahmad, for a short while, settled in Delhi, where he came into contact with the family of Shah Walliullah. Either on the initiative of the Walliullah family, or on his own, he began his movement which he called Tariqa-i-Muhammadi (Path of the Holy Prophet PBUH).

There were two objects of his movement. First, to purify Islam of those concepts, rituals and customs which had polluted its teachings and distorted the Islamic belief of Tawhid (Pantheism). Second, to set up an Islamic state to implement the Sharia and revive the ideal society of the early days of Islam.

To propogate his teachings, he widely travelled from 1818 to 1821 and addressed a number of meetings. The first step which was taken by him was the decision to go on a ~~the~~ pilgrimage to Makkah. The decision was significant because, after the control of the European nations over sea, few Muslims dared to go for the pilgrimage. Some of the ulema, realising the danger, issued a fatwa suspending the Haj. Therefore, in view of these circumstances, his decision revived one of the significant and important teachings of Islam.

On his journey to the Holy Land, a large number of his disciples accompanied him. On his way back from Haj, he toured different areas of Hindustan and addressed big gatherings. It is said that his presence created great enthusiasm in the towns and the people swore allegiance to the pure teachings of Islam.

The question arises: why did the people follow him and join his movement? The answer to this question lies in the socio-economic and political conditions of 18th and 19th centuries of India when the central power of the Mughal Empire was greatly weakened as a result of the provincial independent ruling dynasties. The East India Company was slowly increasing its power and, by occupying new territories, changing its political and social structure.

Consequently, the Muslim nobility and the ulema were being uprooted from their positions and faced social and economic problems. The other professional group which was affected by the change were the soldiers. As a result of the domination of the East India Company, rulers of the small states disbanded their armies and soon there were a number of soldiers without jobs.

The total effect of the situation was that there was widespread belief that the Muslim society was in a state of decline and there appeared no hope to rescue the Muslims from this plight. In a situation which was so hopeless, the movement of Sayyid Ahmad created a new enthusiam, a new life, and a new spirit to change their destiny, to revive past glory, and to regain their dignity.

His teachings provided a mission to the people and assured a bright future. Most of his disciples were from big cities, belonging to the middle class or the artisans who had lost their professions and jobs as a result of the change. The sermons of Sayyid Ahmad and Shah Ismail attracted a large number of people and ended the lethargic atmosphere of the society. The ulema and the people of the middle class joined his movement in the hope of reviving golden days.

Sayyid Ahmad believed that only Jihad could bring a change in the life of the Muslims. Therefore, he created a spirit of Jihad among his followers to fight for the cause of Islam and to set up an Islamic state. To achieve these aims, he faced problems. Most of his followers were from Northern India and in these parts the military power of the East India Company was strong. With his meagre resources and a small army he could not challenge the British. Although he declared India as Dar Al-Harab (land of war), realising his weak position, he found another enemy to challenge. It was the Sikh power of the Punjab. He decided to recruit volunteers and declared war against the Sikhs.

The Jihad Movement and the Tribal Leaders

Sayyid Ahmad, in order to launch a campaign against the Sikhs, chose the territory of the North-West Frontier. It was the general belief of North Indian Muslims that the Pathans were staunchly religious people and could easily be motivated to fight for the cause of religion. Believing their movement to be religious, Sayyid Ahmad and his disciples were sure that they would win over the majority of the Pathans for their cause. They also hoped that the Muslims of the Punjab, as they suffered under the Sikh rule, would help them.

Those who joined the Jihad movement were simple people with religious enthusiasm. They believed that in spite of their numerical weakness, they would be able, like the Muslims of early Islam, to defeat the unbelievers. It was also their belief that Sayyid Ahmad could unite the different Pathan tribes as the Holy Prophet (PBUH) integrated the Arab tribes into one nation.

As every movement needs some moral justification for its action, Sayyid Ahmad convinced his disciples that the Muslims of the Punjab were suffering under Sikh rule. They had no religious freedom; the mosques were converted into stables; the Azan (call of worship) was prohibited; and Muslim women were dishonoured. There is no doubt that some of the extremist Sikhs had adopted a hostile attitude towards the Muslims and had violated their religious sanctity, but as a whole, the rule of Ranjit Singh was tolerant and there were a number of Muslims in the administration and the army. That was the reason that the Muslims of the Punjab did not respond to the call of Sayyid Ahmad and remained loyal to Ranjit Singh. On the contrary, Muslim soldiers from other parts of India fought against him in different battles.

Following in the footsteps of the early Mulsims, Sayyid Ahmad sent a message to Ranjit Singh asking him either to become a Muslim, or to pay "Jizya" or be ready for war. He fought the first battle in December 1826 at Akora. Victory in the battle not only strengthened belief in the cause but impressed the Afghan tribes with the valour and courage shown. After this, it was decided to have an organization to implement the Sharia in the occupied territories. As the head of the organisation, Sayyid Ahmad was declared Amir-ul-Mumineen and Caliph.

One of the characteristics of Revivalist movements is to recall the socio-political and economic institutions of the early days of religion. Sayyid Ahmad also revived the old institutions and traditions and used the terms of Khalifa, Imam, Majlis-i-Shura, and Baitul Maal. He referred to his wars as the wars of the early period of Islam. For example, once he built a wall against the Sikh attack and called it the battle of the Ditch (Khandaq).

However, his declaration of Imamat not only created hostility in the Frontier but it was received with suspicion also in Northern India. When his name was read in the Khutba, it was believed by the tribal leaders that it was an attempt to deprive them of power and leadership. Ismail Shaheed strongly reacted against this opposition and wrote that it was incumbent upon every Muslim to obey him. Those who dared to reject his claim were rebels, hypocrites and traitors, thus, liable to death. Sayyid Ahmad, writing a letter to the Nawab of Tonk, also condemned all the people who refused to recognise him as a Caliph.

As a result of his religious and political domination, Sayyid Ahmad changed the whole structure of the Frontier for which the tribal leaders and their followers were not ready. To recognise somebody as a leader who was not Pathan and came uninvited from Northern India, was unpalatable for them. The result of this hostility was that the Mujahideen, instead of fighting the Sikhs, got entangled increasingly in conflict with the Pathan tribes. The tribal leaders had cooperated with the Jihad movement hoping to oust the Sikhs and re-establish their authority in the tribal areas, but the attempt of Sayyid Ahmad to assert his political and religious authority disappointed them and soon they found no difference between him and the Sikh rule. Although he appealed to them in the name of religion to cooperate with him and promised to give them an ample share from the war booty, the tribal leaders were not ready to surrender their power and recognise a Maulvi as their leader. One of the Pathan leaders, Khadi Khan, once expressed the view that looking after the affairs of the state was the responsibility of the leaders; the

Maulvi's job was to perform religious rituals and be happy with the charity which he got from the people's generosity.

The opposition changed the whole outlook of the Jihad movement and it was decided to first curb the recalcitrant tribes and their leaders, then in the second stage to fight against the Sikhs.

Sayyid Ahmad's Unpopularity in the Frontier

Before launching a compaign against the Sikhs, Sayyid Ahmad decided to control the tribal areas and strengthen his domination. In order to implement his scheme, he began a series of wars against the tribal leaders, and to justify his aggression he accused them of practising un-Islamic rituals and ignoring the Shariah. He declared that in view of their violation of the Islamic teachings, it had become his duty to punish them and implement Islamic laws.

In justification of his aggression against his fellow Muslims, the fatwa of Amir Timur was produced which was issued by the ulema of his time, legitimising the invasion of the Amir against the Muslim rulers of India on the grounds that the rulers had failed to curb the un-Islamic practices in society. In this case, to invade such a country, massacre the people, and engage in plunder was a religious duty.

Following in Timur's footsteps, Sayyid Ahmad fought a battle in 1830 against Yar Mohammad Khan, the ruler of Yaghistan. The latter was killed in the battlefield and Peshawar came under the control of the mujahideen. Some of the tribal leaders, realising the gravity of the situation, took an oath of allegiance, but some of them refused. One of them was Payanda Khan. He was declared a heretic and holy war was declared against him. Another leader was Khadi Khan of Hund. As he turned disloyal after taking the oath of allegiance, he was called a traitor punishable by death. After his execution, the mujahideen refused to offer his funeral prayers. The result was that he was buried by the Pathan Maulvis.

After the occupation of Peshawar, an extermist policy was adopted by the mujahideen. All those tribal customs which were regarded un-Islamic were abolished. To look after the implementation of the Shariah, Imam Qutab Al-Din was appointed as the Muhtasib. He, along with thirty armed soldiers, roamed around the villages and punished all those youths who failed to say their prayers. They were very strict in punishment and brutally beat the people and tortured them. Even women were not spared. They imposed heavy fines on people which were beyond their capacity to pay. This policy soon made them unpopular.

The Pathan ulema became hostile when the mujahideen began to collect Ushr (a religious tax on agriculture) which was received by the Pathan ulema before. It rendered a heavy financial blow to them. The result was that they opposed all religious reforms introduced by them. Sayyid Ahmad and his followers were also not popular in Northern India because of their extremist views. Those ulema who opposed him sent a document to the Frontier accusing him of being a British agent. This made his position very weak.

Another factor which created unrest among the people was that, as most of the mujahideen came unaccompanied by their families, they forced Pathan families to marry their daughters to them. There were instances when a mujahid kidnapped a girl, took her to the mosque and married her without her consent. In case an Indian married a girl from the Khweshgi tribe, there was widespread anger against this act, and even the Khattak tribe, which was hostile to the Khweshgi, took an oath to take revenge for this insult.

Moreover, those Pathan families whose girls were married to the Indian mujahideen were not spared by the fellow Pathans who reprimanded them on marrying their girls "to the black and ugly Indians".

Thus, the attempt to change the social and religious structure of the tribes and to force them to recognise his authority turned leaders and people against Sayyid Ahmad and his movement. It was secretly planned to kill all mujahideen in Peshawar and its neigbouring areas. The plan was successfully executed and the majority of the mujahideen were murdered. It made Sayyid Ahmad dejected and depressed. He wanted to leave the Frontier and go to Kashmir but before his departure he had to fight against the Sikhs at Balakot in 1831. In the battle, he was defeated and killed. So ended the Jihad movement.

Causes of the failure of the Jihad Movement

If we critically examine the causes of the failure of the Jihad Movement, we find that Sayyid Ahmad and his followers, before seclecting the North-West Frontier as their base, did not study the geography of the area, history of the tribes, the tribal system, customs, traditions, and habits. Neither did they learn their language. They failed to understand that the linguistic relations were more sound and deep than religious affiliations. It was assumed by them that belonging to the same religion was enough, and that being good Muslims, the Pathans would support their cause.

When the mujahideen made attempts by force to rule over them, to deprive them of their power, authority, and to condemn their traditions, they were, resultantly, hated by the local population. Ismael Shaheed realised it and expressed it in his writings: that to make the tribal area the headquarters for the movement it was necessary first to win over the people for the cause and then ask them for cooperation.

Moreover, those volunteers who came along with Sayyid Ahmad were not all religious zealots and did not join him for the glory of Islam but to loot and plunder and amass wealth in the garb of jihad. Some of the soldiers were those who became jobless when Amir Khan dibanded his army. They were mercenaries and fighting was their profession. They joined the mujahideen because they had no future in India after the establishment of British raj. The Jihad movement provided them an excellent chance to serve the religious cause and also to earn worldly wealth.

Most of the volunteers had no military experience, nor were they trained by professionals. Therefore, there was no discipline in the army. Moreover, they were not fully equipped and depended on the financial contribution of northern Indian well-wishers to buy more weapons and food. Although they received good financial aid in the beginning, later on it began to decrease and finally it became difficult to get any.

A study of the movement proves that it was started on merely assumptions without realising the realities and practical difficulties. Any movement which is based on emotions and uses fanaticism as a weapon to exploit the sentiments of the people is bound to fail. This happened to the Jihad movement.

The result was that the Jihad movement could neither defeat the Sikhs nor set up an Islamic state in the Frontier. The British government kept its silence as long as it was against the Sikhs and allowed the supply of weapons and money to flow from their territories, but as soon as they conquered the Punjab in 1849, they crushed the movement and in the Wahabi trial, all those who were involved, were severely punished . Consequently, Maulvi Muhammad Hussain made peace with the government and declared the Wahabis as Ahli-

Hadis. To mitigate the hostile feelings of the government, he also wrote a booklet against the jihad.

However, some characteristics of the Jihad movement may be pointed out. First of all, it was purely an internal movement and had no link with any foreign land. Secondly, the whole movement was financed by local resources. The movement, because of its revivalist nature, created a gulf which arrested the growth of the composite culture which was rapidly developing in the 19th century.

As a result of the failure of the movement, the ulema, instead of the Jihad, turned towards missionary activities. This divided the ulema into different sects and groups. These differences were fully reflected in the writings of the ulema in which they accused their opponents of being unbelievers and heretics.

There was such hatred against each other that when the news of Sayyid Ahmad's death reached India, his enemies celebrated it by distributing sweets.

It is evident from Islamic history that such movements, instead of uniting the Muslims, further divided them. The followers of Sayyid Ahmad have a sect of their own known as the Wahabi, or Ahli-Hadis and like to keep its separate identity rather than to integrating with other Muslims.

Religious Reforms and Social Problems

In the later Mughal period (18th and 19th centuries) the ulema usually complained that women were habitually visiting shrines and appearing in public, shamelessly violating the age-old custom keeping themselves in purdah. Condemning it, they never tried to understand the socio-cultural milieu in which women were forced to observe purdah. Having low social status, regarded as property, and living in the four walls like prisoners and having no access to the outer world, the only pretext to go out was to visit the shrines. That was their recreation and they fully used it.

Mirza Hyrat Dehlawi, writing an eye-witness account, laments that women belonging the noble families daily visited the shrines and provided opportunities to hooligans to tease and seduce them. He complains that whenever women visited the tombs, they never cared about purdah and exchanged remarks with strangers. Mirza Hyrat, by complaining about the women's attitude, never bothered to understand the miseries of the women of his time and how they suffered because of isolation.

The reformist ulema such as Ismail Shaheed, on the one hand, wanted to keep women in purdah, but on the other wanted them to be enlightened by urging them to refrain from practising superstitious customs such as offering presents and gifts at the graves of the saints and praying for dead souls as intermediaries in making contact with God. What he failed to realise was that these habits could not be changed unless the social status of women was raised. As no attempt was made to educate them, women remained superstitious, illiterate, and socially low in the eyes of the society.

Similarly, when people sought the help pf saints and deities in case of their illness, the only reason was that there were no hospitals, no doctors, and no medicines available to cure disease. Therefore, the only solace to the poor was either to rely on prayers to recover or die.

Society cannot be changed by delivering sermons or exhorting people to abandon some social or cultural customs without changing their material conditions. The result was that in spite of the efforts of the ulema, the customs prevailed. The change came only when, after the establishment of the British government, new medicines became available to cure such incurable diseases as small-pox. Once the cure was discovered, the workshop of Satila deity (the deity of small pox) came to an end.

This proves that the first condition for reform in any society is to educate the people, to study the different diseases prevalent and not only to discover their cure, but to make it available to the common man; to raise their economic and social status. Only then is the socio-cultural tansformation of a society is possible. Without any material and intellectual change, mere sermons and warnings against hell in case of violation, failed to change the mindset.

Thus, the ulema of the Indian subcontinent did not succeed in their attempts to reform the society according to their beliefs. They never tried to investigate the roots of the social problems. They condemned them only as Hindu customs and practices of the unbelievers. The tragedy is that the ulema still adopt the same policy to eradicate social evils without emphasising social change.

Role of the Sajjadanishin and Ulema During the Colonial Period

During the colonial period, the ulema and Sjjadanishin (belonging to the families of sufi saints), because of their social status and vested interests, played quite different roles. Sajjadanishin, in comparison to the ulema were socially more advanced and financially more strong. As their forefathers were granted landed property by rulers, they inherited it as their successors and it made them landed gentry. Moreover, their families had a large number of disciples who believed they possessed spiritual powers, and sought their help from time to time to solve their problems.

Therefore, as guardians of shrines, successors of the seat of piety of their ancestors, and recipients of gifts and presents from rulers, nobility, and common people, they had a privileged position in society, whereby it was their interest to preserve their social status and privileges by supporting the rulers and existing governments.

As most of the Sajjadanishin resided in rural areas, they also played the role of mediators between the people and government. This made them very influential and the government, in order to implement its policies, had to rely on the support of this class.

Moreover, as landlords, they patronised a number of people including poets, musicians, artists, and religious scholars and had such respect that no government could ignore their importance.

The British government fully realised their influence and power and therefore planned a system which included them as collaborators. It offered them the role of mediators between the people and government and in return granted them titles, honours, and special privileges. The role of sufi saints during the colonial period, in Sindh and the Punjab, is discussed by Sara Ansari and Gilmartin in their scholarly book, Sufi Saints and State Power (1991), and Islam and Empire, (1991), respectively.

It is evident that the Sajjadanishin, throughout the colonial period, remained loyal to the government and as such enjoyed all types of facilities and privileges. Only in one or two cases did some individuals try to assert their independence and were immediately crushed by the imperial government.

On the other hand, the position of the ulema was quite different. Financially they had no permanent source of income and depended on the patronage of the government or nobility. As teachers and performers of religious rituals, their social status was low. As most of the ulema resided in urban centres, they did not have influence in rural areas. Therefore as a less privileged group, their attitude towards the colonial government was hostile. The reasons for their hostility varied: with the replacement of the old new political system, they lost the patronage of government; the abolition of waqf (endowment) cut off their major source of income; and the opening of government schools directly affected their madaris because the majority of students preferred to study in government schools to get jobs.

The colonial government also did not pamper the ulema class like the Sjjadanishin because, as a class, their influence was scattered and not deep-rooted. Therefore, the ulema could not become a part of the imperial system, though the government, in case of need, recruited the services of individual ulema to counter the anti-government fatwas from time to time.

Under these circumstances, the ulema, unlike the Sajjadanishin, took part in politics and engaged actively in revivalist and reformist movements.

Ulema and Religio-Political Organisations

The colonial administration for the first time introduced a system of organisations in India which was followed by the socio-religious parties formed in reaction to the colonial system. An organisation required, first of all, to have a constitution, by-law, and government registration for its legal working. The constitution provided the full structure of a new organisation which required it to have a hierarchy of office holders; founder and general members, to maintain account; to prepare annual reports; to have regular meetings; and to record all resolutions passed and keep records of the proceedings.

When the East India Company allowed the missionaries to settle in the Company's territories in 1813, the ulema of India, after observing their model, adopted it for their own organisation. To fulfil their projects, they appealed to the public for finances and regular subscriptions. The result was that these religious parties were in a position to purchase properties, build madressas and orphanages. Consequently, the whole system produced a class of professional ulema who fully utilized these religious welfare organisations as a source of their income. Some of them worked well; but most of them disillusioned people as a result of mismanagement, embezzlement, and corruption.

Besides, madressas, mosques and religious reforms-oriented organisations, the ulema were inspired by the emergence of political parties and aspired to get a dignified place in society by organising themselves in parties. The ambitions of the ulema are evident in an address of Shibli, a well-known religious scholar.

Gentlemen! In the days of Muslim rule the worldly as well as religious affairs of the Muslims were in the hands of the ulema. In addition to regulations regarding prayers, fasting, etc. the ulema decided judicial cases. They punished criminals and passed orders, awarding capital punishment or ransom. In short, the reins of the affairs of the community relating both to this and the next world were in the hands of the Ulema. Now that things have changed, and worldly affairs have come under the authority of (the British) government. "We have to see what relationship the ulema have with the community, viz, what powers have been taken over by the government, and what have been left over and are within the domain of the ulema, in which government does not wish to interfere." (quoted by Francis Robinson: Separation among Indian Muslims, P.275).

To achieve these objects, the ulema formed different parties. One of the them was the Majlis Muid al-Islam which was initiated by the ulema of Faringi Mahal with the object to promote Shariat and to help the Muslims to attain progress. Soon there emerged different parties based on sectarian ideologies such as the All India Shia Conference in 1907. The Sunni Ulema formed the Jamiat Ulema-i-Hind in 1914 to protect the

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Khilafat and the Holy places against the aggression of the European powers.

In the beginning, the ulema were not in favour of cooperating with political parites and argued that in case of participation in their meetings they had to sit along with non-Muslim women; and during the session they might miss their prayers.

However, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, although disillusioned by the character and scholarship of the Ulema of his time, was enthusiastic to train and involve them in politics. He argued that in Europe, people were ready to sacrifice for their motherland, but the Muslims could be inspired only in the name if religion. Therefore, he organized a party known as the Hizb Allah (party of God) to make the ulema active in politics. Azad regarded religion and politics inseparable and therefore, justified all political decisions on the basis of religious interpretations.

He founded a madressa, Dar al-Irshad in 1914, to educate a new generation of ulema in order to respond to the challenges of the modern world.

As a result of the organisations of the ulema they became an important factor in politics and soon the Congress as well as the Muslim League made attempts to win them over to their sides.

Ulema and the Khilafat Movement

After the emergence of a new European-educated class, following the footsteps of the Congress, the Muslim political leadership organised itself to assert their rights under the changing political system. Thus, religion and politics remained separate and both parties, the ulema and the European-educated class, pursued different ideologies. On all political issues, such as Urdu Hindi conficts, joining the Congress party, partition of Bengal, formation of the Simla Deputation, and the foundation of the Muslim League, the ulema were kept isolated and were not included or consulted by the Muslim politicians. All issues were dealt with on political and not on religious basis.

However, the Balkan wars (1912-14), the protection of the holy places and preservation of the institution of Khilafat, gradually brought the ulema and the secular leadership close to each other; and henceforth the ulema influenced political issues.

The Khilafat movement was the turning point. The secular Muslim leadership decided to ask the ulema to cooperate with it in making the Khilafat issue active in order to pressurise the British government to adopt a lenient attutude towards Turkey.

In the Muslim League session of 1918, Dr. Ansari invited the leading ulema to attend and adopt a uniform policy regarding the Khilafat. This opportunity delighted the ulema. Maulana Kifayatullah, Maulana Abdul Bari, Maulana Ahmad Saeed, and Azad Sabhani were the prominent ulema who graced the session. They fully realised that their cooperation with the educated Muslim class would enhance their prestige and give them an opportunity to lead the community. Maulana Kifayatullah, after the session, expressed his opinion.

"I have always been of the opinion that the religion and politics of Musalmans were one and the same thing. In fact, their religion was their politics and their politics was their religion. So far they had thought the Musalmans had committed their religion to the custody of the ulema and their politics to the All India Muslim League and its kindred organisations, but when the call went out to them (the ulema) they came out with open arms and pleasure to join the political body."

Another Maulvi, Ghulam Mohiyuddin, said:

"Up to this time, the ulema had considered the religion and politics of the Musalmans two different things but in fact they were one and the same in Islam. Their politics was their religion."

On the one side, all were happy that the inclusion of the ulema would strengthen the movement, but, Chaudhary Khaliquzzaman realised the implications of religion and politics and warned:

"They were playing with fire in uniting with the ulema. They would be either swept off their legs or carry the whole of Muslim India with them."

Later on, the support of Gandhi to the Khilafat movement transformed it into a mass movement with the help of the Congress. It pushed the ulema to the forefront as leaders of the Muslim community. Hamza Alavi, keeping in view this aspect, writes in "Pakistan and Islam: Ethnicity and Ideology:"

"It was a cynical and tactical political move that promised to isolate the Muslim Salariat leadership from Muslim masses by arousing their fanatical passions behind a hopeless and anachronistic cause."

According to Alavi it curtailed the role of the Muslim League and the opportunity to form their own political party, Jamiat Ulema-i-Hind, in 1919.

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Since then, the ulema became an important factor in politics and both the Congress and the League sought their support to win the sympathy and cooperation of the Muslim community.

The mixing of religion with politics greatly hampered the Muslim understanding of politics. Instead of analysing political issues and judging them on merit, all these issues were discussed on the basis of religious interpretations. For example, the Khilafat issue for Muslims was purely religious while it was political to the Hindus. Consequently, it strengthened the religious consciousness of Muslims while strengthening the political consciousness of the Hindus. The Muslims of India sacrificed their own interests for a religious cause in which no Muslim country had any interest. Thus involvement of religion in politics made the Muslims of India backward and inward looking. They paid a heavy price for it.

Maulana Azad and the Scheme of Imamat

The majority of the ulema after constantly preaching the significance of the institution of Khilafat, convinced the Muslim community that without the Khilafat, their religion would become defenceless. Therefore, the question was how to preserve and protect the faith and save the Muslim community from disintegration.

Maulana Azad put forward a scheme to have an Imam (religious leader) for the Muslim community of India. One of his close friends and disciples, Abdur Razzaq Malihabadi, discussed in detail this scheme. Azad wanted to unite the Muslims of India on the basis of religious faith; therefore, an Imam, elected, nominated, or selected, should head the community to guide it in religious and worldly matters: the Muslims of India should be convinced that an Imam was essential to keep their religious life aline: and in the absence of an Imam their religion would remain incomplete. Malihabadi, further explaining the importance of the Imam, wrote that an Imam could deal with the Hindus and after signing a pact, could declare holy war against the British which would ultimately lead to independence of India.

Malihabadi, then, posed the question: who could be an Imam? Because the post was important and demanded high qualifications, the man should be a religious scholar, and have strong character; he should be a good and experienced politician. Therefore, only a man of integrity could occupy this post.

Maulana Azad regarded himself the most suitable candidate for this post and planned to take the oath of allegiance (baia) from the public. He thought that once the oath was taken, the opposition of other ulema would be silenced and he would be unanimosuly recognised by all Muslims as their Imam.

Maulana Azad appointed his deputies (Khulafa) to the different provinces and instructed them to invite the people to a feast and convince them about his Imamat. Malihabadi worked as a deputy in the province of U.P. and successfully convinced the people of the Imamat of Maulana Azad.

However, the problem arose when Maulana Mahmud al-Hasan arrived in Lucknow after his release from Malta and stayed with Maulana Abdul Bari Faringi Mahli and when Malihabadi tried to get the recognition of Azad's Imamat from these two. They avoided it. When it was reported to Azad, he was not discouraged and asked Malihabadi to continue his mission, as there were encouraging reports from Sindh and Bengal.

But then, all of a sudden in September 1920, Azad decided to end the campaign of his Imamat and turned his attention to to other issues. Azad was a practical and astute politician; soon he realised that the leading ulema and Muslim politicians were not unanimous about selecting him as their supreme religious leader. So, he decided to abandon the whole scheme.

Though the scheme was abandoned, it shows how Azad was responsible in involving religion in political issues. The Muslims of India, thereafter, became accustomed to consulting the ulema on all matters: political, economic, or social. Interestingly, the religious sentiments of the Muslims of India, later on, were more exploited by the European educated leadership of the Muslim League rather than the ulema themselves.

In the Pakistan Movement, although the leading ulema opposed it, the League leadership defeated them on their own ground and appealed to religious sentiments to achieve political ends. This proves that though religion and politics became inseparable, the political benefits were always taken by the non-religious and modern-educated leadership. The ulema remained losers in the end, without gaining any respect in society.

Ulema and the Policy of Migration

The Khilafat movement gave an impetus to the ulema to play an effective role in politics and widely mobilise Muslims on the basis of religion. The fatwa and Jihad became the tools which were used by the ulema to further their influence. One example was the "Muttafiqa fatwa" (uniform fatwa) issued by the ulema during the Khilafat movement which exhorted Muslims to prevent non-Muslims from taking possession of the holy places of Islam. At the same time, the ulema also made attempts to establish a state within the state by setting up the Shariat Court and by collecting Zakat.

In Sindh, some ulema also issued a fatwa asking Muslims to renounce titles and cease to cooperate with the government because the Christians "had killed pigs, walked with boots on, smoked cigarettes, drunk liquor, in the sacred places of Islam." The ulema, throughout India, by using mosques, delivered sermons to fight a holy war against the Christians.

Thus the Muslims of India came in the full grip of the ulema who created an atmosphere of fury. As B.R. Nanda, in "Gandhi Pan-Islamism, Imperialism and Nationalism," writes: "Excitement rose to a high pitch. Wild rumours were rife; it was alleged that the study of the Quran was about to be banned in British India, that

Mecca and Madina were under British occupation, that the sanctuary of Kaaba had been destroyed, that Sunday was going to be the day of prayers instead of Friday." Therefore, in this situation, there were two choices for the Muslims: Jihad or Hijrat (holy war or migration from India).

Abul Kalam Azad, at this juncture, issued a fatwa favouring Hijrat: "After taking into account all the provisions of the Shariat, contemporary events the interests of the Muslims of India and pros and cons [of political issues], I feel satisfied .... the Muslims of India have no choice but to migrate from India ... those who cannot migrate immediately should help the migrants." The fatwa was endorsed by Maulana Abdul Bari of Farnagi Mahal. The result of the migration to Afghanistan was that nearly 10,000 Muslims died and thousands suffered humiliation at the hands of their Afghan brethren. In the end the whole episode collapsed without gaining any political benefits for the Muslims of India.

The issue of migration was again dicussed by the ulema on the eve of partition, 1947. This time two groups of ulema, pro-Congess and pro-League, interpreted it according to their political leanings. Maulana Hussain Ahmad passionately appealed to the Muslims not to migrate and leave the graves of their ancestors, historical places, mosques, and cultural centres unattended. He argued that they would be ruined in their absence.

On the other hand, Shabbir Ahmad Osmani argued that the Prophet (PBUH), at the time of migration, left everything in Mecca. Therefore, the Muslims of India would convert Pakistan into Madina.

Interestingly, Azad delivered a very emotional speech at Jamia Masjid, Delhi in 1947 on the issue of migration of the Muslims of India to Pakistan. He vehemently condemned their migration and termed it an escape. He appealed to his audience that "the high and lofty minarets of the mosque ask the question: where have you lost the pages of history? It was just yesterday, that your caravans washed their hands and faces from the waters of the Jamuna; and today you are afraid to stay here. Delhi has been nourished on your blood." He further reminds them that "The historical remains are yours ... Don't leave them, stay here as their heir,. If you decide not to escape, no power on earth forces you to leave the country."

Comparing his fatwa of 1920, and his speech of 1947, one finds contradictions. In 1920, it was obligatory for every Muslim to leave India without bothering about the sacred places, mosques, tombs, shrines and homes and hearths; but in 1947, it became the sacred duty of every Muslim to protect them and avoid migration. All this happened because political issues were decided on the basis of religion and not on the basis of hard and real facts; and, on both occasions, the Muslims of India suffered and those who decided to migrate, became rootless.

Ulema and the System of "Manazira"

Before the arrival of the British, there was no tradition of "Manazira" (religous debate). The Muslim ulema and Hindu pandits discussed religious topics within mosques and temples. Denigration of each other's religion was avoided. Attempts at conversion were also made silently and secretly. There was an understanding between the religious leaders of the two faiths and rarely did they challenge the other's beliefs as false.

The atmosphere of religious harmony continued until Christian missionaries arrived to convert the people of Hindustan. They came fully equipped with modern knowledge, organisation, discipline, government support and financial help. They studied Islam and other Indian religions with the intention to attack them at their weak points. They fully took advantage of the printing press and produced a number of books and pamphlets which were distributed freely. They adopted different methods of preaching: they gathered people in the bazaars, streets, and in festivals and started to elaborate the virtues of their religion. On March 30, 1989, the "Lahore Tribune" writes:

"Street preaching is very much in vogue here nowadays. All along Anarkali, Hindu, Mohammedan, Christian, Arya, and Brahmo preachers may be seen earnestly expatiating on the excellence of their respective creeds, surrounded by crowds of apparently attentive listeners."

The institution of "Manazira" made the ulema very active and, to respond to the challenge, they started to study Christianity and the Hindu religion. However, the "manazira" took place not only with Christians and Hindus, but also among the different sects of Muslims.

Soon it became customary that before the "manazira", the rival parties fixed the conditions; for example, that the debate would continue from five to fifteen days; and the loser would embrace the opponent's religion. But there were always problems during and after the "manazira". Nobody accepted defeat and each proclaimed his victory. To assert his victory, each speaker tried to speak last in an attempt not to give any chance to his rival and to declar him defeated.

Mostly, in these debates, arguments were not based on scholarship, but each tried to outwit his opponent with jokes, sarcasm, and by attacking him violently. The popular topics which were discussed, according to B.D. Metcalf, were the divinity of Chirst, Trinity, Textual Corruption of the Bible, the Nature of Creation, the proof of the Divinity of Vedas, Bible, and Quran, and the nature of means of salvation.

There were some famous "manaziras" which are reported in the biographies of some ulema. One such was organised at Chandpur in 1870. It was known as Mela-i-Khudashanasi (festival of the recognition of God) in which Muslims, Hindus, and Christians participated.

From the Muslim side, Maulana Qaṣim Nanotwi (d.1879) and Maulana Mahmud al-Hasan took part in the debate.

The "manaziras" with a German missionary Karl Pfander were very famous. In 1850, Maulana Rahmaula Uthmani defeated him. According to the ulema's version, he was again defeated in 1854 at Agra and left India in humiliation.

There were also debates with Hindu preachers. The ulema always claimed victory. Such was the case of Pandit Diyanad Sarswati who failed to respond to the ulema's challenges. The religious discussion also involved the ulema of different sects. The famous "manazira" was between Shah Ismail (d.1831) and Maulana Fazal Haq Khairabadi (d.1861) on the issue of Imkan-i-Nazir (possibility of an equal), i.e, can God create another like the Holy Prophet (PBUH)? In the later period, there were "manaziras" among the Deobandis, Ahl-i-Hadith, and Barelwis on different religious issues.

The institution of "manazira" left a great impact. For the first time, the people were addressed, which gave them a sense of importance. "Manaziras" soon became popular in the absence of any public entertainment and people gathered not only to listen to religious arguments but to enjoy the jokes and rebuttals of speakers. Moreover, these "minaziras" provided a source of identity to each community and enahnced the image of the ulema who appeared as defenders of the religion.

On the other side, the "manaziras" also created religious tension among the followers of different religions. Later on, this assumed the shape of communalism in which the Hindus and Muslims clashed with each other, mostly on minor religous issues.

The institution of "manazira" slowly came to an end with the spread of education and the availability of the printing material and with the weakening of the "manazira" the ulema lost their importance because a European-educated Muslim class emerged which responded to the challenges of the opponents with the help of modern research methodology.

The Ulema and Mosques

During the period of the Muslim dynastic rule, it was the practice of the rulers and the nobility to build mosques in memory of their victories, or out of religious devotion. To meet the expenses, Waqf (endowment) property was attached to them; Imams, Khatibs, and muessins got their salaries from this income. The state controlled the appointment and activities of the employees on the instructions of the government and appealed to the people to be loyal to the reigning monarch.

During the colonial period, however, the whole situation changed. As there were a number or religious parties which emerged in response to political change, and each one of them tried to win over the followers of the Muslim community. The madrassa and mosques became the centres of their activities. Soon the existing mosques were captured by one or the other party; and it was needed to build more and more mosques to accommodate the growing number of ulema. The difference this time was that he new mosques were built with the help of public donations and subscriptions. From colonial times to the present, the subscription for the building or mosque has become a permanent source of income. In most cases, the building is never completed. It is over-decorated or constantly altered to justify subscriptions and to attract more donations.

Another characteristic of the construction of a mosque is the attached shops which provide permanent income and hence an assurance of salaries to the employees. Thus, mosques provide not only financial security but religious and social influence to Imams and Khatibs in their locality.

There were many instances during the colonial period when different religious sects occupied the mosques and, in order to keep their hold, banned the rival sects from saying their prayers in their mosques. There were a number of conflicts when the Ahl-i-Hadis made attempts to say their prayers in the mosques of other sects. As they pronounced "Amin" loudly, it was resented by others. In some cases, the mosque was cleaned and washed thoroughly; and in some cases, they were physically thrown out.

B.D. Metclaff quotes a number of such cases in her book "Islamic Revival in British India". Muhammad Saidullah and his companions, belonging to the Ahl-i-Hadis, were denied prayer in a mosque of Mau. They ultimately read it in a jungle. Later on, they built their own mosques.

Against this discriminatory attitude, the Ahl-i-Hadis appealed to the British court. Justice Mahmud, son of Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan, in his decision of 1889 wrote: "A mosque cannot be dedicated or appropriated exclusively to any particular school or sect of Sunni Muhammadans. Members of the Muhammadi or Wahabi sects are Muhammadans and as such entitled to perform their devotion in a mosque. But any Muhammadi would commit a criminal offence who, not in the bona fide performance of his duties, but mala fide, for the purpose of disturbing others engaged in their devotions, made any demonstrations, oral or otherwise".

Metcalf gave details of other cases in which the British government was involved between the Ahl-i-Hadis and other sects. In Meeruth in 1892, to avoid a sectarian clash, the magistrates divided the city mosques: five were given to the Ahl-i-Hadis and the rest to the Hanafis.

The battle of mosques came down from the colonial period to the present. Each sect has a monopoly. Time and again attempts are made by other sects to capture it. The result is that each sect has its own mosques and rivals are not allowed to enter. As the number of sects increases, the number of mosques also multiplies. Every locality has four to five mosques at a short distance equipped with powerful loudspeakers, staffed with an Imam and muezzin and a Madrassa. Economically, it is self-sufficient as it contains shops which ensure a regular income.

In the early period of Islamic history, the mosque, was the centre of social, cultural, and literary activities. Sectarian bigotry has reduced this function. On the contrary, it is used to exploit the religious sentiments of the people and to spread religious controversies.

Realising its importance, military dictators fully used the institutions of the mosque in their favour. By establishing the department of Auqaf, the government has taken the major mosques under its control and has employed Imams, Khatibs, and muezzins of its choice. In return, they favour the policies of the government and endorse the authoritarian rule of dictators as Islamic.

Ulema and the Institution of the Sermon

The tradition of delivering sermons on religious topics is very old in Muslim societies. Usually these sermons are held in mosques where, after or before congregational prayers, an alim (scholar) speaks on some religious topic with references to the Holy Quran and the Hadith. The purpose of these sermons is to exhort Muslims to follow religious teachings and to refrain from any deviation from the religious path.

It was the practice in the past that some Muslim rulers and nobles invited the ulema to their private meetings and listened to their sermons in order to display their piety. The occasion to deliver sermons provided the ulema with a unique opportunity to admonish and humiliate their audience for not following the right path and being involved in worldly affairs. Once on the pulpit, the alim ruled over his audience and adopted a tone which asserted his superiority over his listeners.

As there was no practice of challenging, criticising and questioning the contents of the sermons, audiences were passive listeners, and kept sitting out of reverence throughout the session. This relationship between speaker and listener made the speaker arrogant and generally he looked down on the people and treated them as corrupt and irreligious.

Although the topics of the sermons varied from time to time, some of them remained favourite topics with the ulema, such as the mortality of the world; deviation from pure religion, worldly affairs, non-observance of Arkan-i-Din (pillars of the faith) such as prayers, fasting, distribution of Zakat (charity), etc. The other topics were adopted according to the relevance of the situation. However, the main theme was to preserve religion according to the beliefs of the alim.

During the declining period of the later Mughals when the political leadership failed to arrest the process of disintegration, it lost all respect; and disillusioned people turned towards the ulema in the hope of finding some spiritual solution to revive past prosperity and stability. Under these circumstances, the favourite theme was to admonish the Muslims for their distance from religion. In every sermon, the ulema narrated the causes of the decline as a result of distorting religion by observing Hindu customs.

At this stage, a puritan group of ulema, under the leadership of Sayyid Ahmad Shaheed (d.1831) emerged, who accused the Muslims of adopting Hindu practices and polluting the purity of Islam. The sermons of Sayyid Ahmad Shaheed and Ismail Shaheed (d.1831) became very popular and wherever they went a large number of Muslims gathered to listen to them.

Besides the revival of Islam, other themes, which attracted people were the condemnation of worldly involvements, especially of the accumulation of wealth. Later on they condemned Sikh rule in the Punjab in their sermons and asked the Muslims to rescue themselves from the oppressive rule of the Sikhs and establish the rule of Shariat.

Thus, the practice of delivering sermons became very popular during the transitional period when the East India Company was slowly gaining political power. Every mosque became the centre of some alim who asked his passive audience to follow the teachings of religion. This filled a vacuum in the cultural life of Muslim society where the alim was admired for his delivery of the sermon, for the beauty of his language; and not for contents.

Sermons became a source of entertainment as were the Musha'iras or qawwalis; therefore, they failed to change the outlook of the people, and to point out the real causes of the downfall, and guide them during the transition period of political change. Mere counsel and advice never alter the course of history. To build or to transform a society, material conditions should be changed. The tragedy is that neither the ulema of the past nor those of the present comprehend this.

The Ulema and Their Fatwas

In a Muslim state it was the responsibility of the Mufti (expert of Muslim jurisprudence) to issue a fatwa in the light of the Quran and Hadith for the guidance of the qazi. The Indian Muslims faced a problem when the structure of the Mughal state shattered and the East India Company took over the administration. Although the Company, in the beginning, retained the Mughal system and kept competent Muftis in service, it slowly ruled over newly conquered territories according to Anglo-Saxon laws.

In the changing political, social, and economic situation, the ulema assumed the power to issue fatwas to guide the Muslims and preserve their religious identity. However, there was one serious problem: the ulema differed with each other on every issue and interpreted religion according to their own understanding and interests.

The division among the ulema divided the Muslims of India into different sects. The result was that what was legal to one, became illegal to the other. There were fatwas and counter-fatwas which bewildered the common Muslim. Later on, each group, to authenticate its fatwas, sought the opinion of the ulema of Hijaz who readily confirmed the contradictory fatwas. Therefore.

the practice of issuing fatwas created more confusion and it became difficult for Muslims to decide any issue.

The fatwas, however, reflect the political and social problems of the Indian Muslims in the changing circumstances. For example in the early period of the East India Company, when the Mughal emperor was under their control, the question arose whether India was Dar al-Harab or Dar al-Aman. Maulana Abdul Aziz (d.1824), declared it as Dar al-Harab, yet regarded emigration (hijrat) not necessary. However, he issued a fatwa that payment of interest to the infidel was lawful in Dar al-Harab.

The importane of the fatwas grew when the East India Company set up its courts and the ulema tried to prevent Muslims from going to court to settle their disputes and ecouraged them to seek guidance from them. The result was that Muslims turned towards the ulema for consultation. However, most queries concerned beliefs, rituals, customs, marriages, divorce, property, relations with infidels, apostates and rebels, partnership, sale, and current political and social issues.

All prominent ulema of India established Dar al-Ifta (centre of issuing fatwas) and issued fatwas for all the Muslims of India. Later on, the printing press facilitated the circulation of their opinion widely. Nearly all known ulema published the collections of their fatwas for the guidance of their fellow Muslims.

During the freedom movement, when the ulema issued fatwas on political issues, it created more confusion. For exmaple, the Deoband ulema regarded India as Dar Al-Harab under British rule and were in favour of cooperating with the Hindus to oust the British from India. Following this injunction, they joined the

Congress and participated in all movements against foreign rule.

This policy and judgment was challenged by Ahmad Raza Khan who declared India as Dar al_Aman because Muslims were free to perform their religious duties. Therefore, he opposed any cooperation with the Hindus and kept aloof from the Khilafat Movement. Similarly, when the Deoband ulema issued fatwas of one Indian nation, the Muslim League ulema in their counter-fatwa justified the two-nation theory and argued that as India could not become Dar al-Islam, the creation of Pakistan was the only solution for the Indian Muslims.

After the partition of India, the practice to get a fatwa for every political social and economic issue is customary. Our ulema still debate whether democracy is Islamic, the banking system is according to Islamic tenets; multiparty system is legal; and what rights minorities have in an Islamic country. The result is that religion and not politics has become more important.

Wisdom demands that political issues should be decided purely on political grounds keeping in view the interest of the country and society. Economic problems should be solved with the help of economic theories and methods. Any attempts to solve these problems by getting fatwas will create more confusion.

The Fatwa is a dangerous weapon in the hands of the ulema. Mostly it is misused. The ulema easily declare their opponents kafirs and annul their marriages. By using it, they exploit the religious emotions of the people and assert their authority. In Christianity, only the Pope has the power to excommunicate, but in our society every alim can issue a fatwa and declare anybody a kafir or liable to be punished with death.

Ulema and the Cult of the "Tawiz"

In most ancient societies, written words and numbers were regarded as having magical powers to heal and to help in overcoming social, financial, and political problems. This belief led to the development of amulets (tawiz) which are prepared by the expert according to the requirements of the applicant.

To retain the privilege of writing the amulet, the religious class has monopolised it. It was believed that everybody is not competent for this task. The writing of amulets is confined to some families and they keep it a secret in order not lose its effectiveness and their own business.

In India and Pakistan, the belief in the healing power of amulets is deep-rooted among the people, literate or illiterate. It is believed that only an alim has authority to write an amulet. The result is that some of the ulema have adopted it as a profession and charge an amount on every amulet not as a fee but a gift (hadya).

Although after the coming of the printing press, some ulema published different collections of the writings of tawiz for the benefit of the general public, even then it is a belief of the people that a tawiz given by an alim has more power than the one copied from a book.

However, these collections provide some interesting information about the demands of the people. Most of the tawiz are for ordinary diseases such as those of eyes, teeth, fever, and smallpox. In the second category comes the tawiz to get profit in trade; to become rich; and to discover and find buried treasure.

The third category concerns women: how to win the love of a beloved; how to attract her; how to meet her; and finally how to get her. This section also carries amulets to reconcile estranged husbands and wives; and to win over rivals.

These collections also have an interesting section about problems of male potency; how to cure impotency; how to get more sexual pleasure and to enslave women with sexual power.

Besides other collections, Ahmad Raza Khan (d.1915) published his collection of tawiz in four volumes known as Shama-i-Shabistan-i-Raza (Raza's lamp for darkness). Besides the usual tawiz for diseases and social problems, it carries some interesting ones. For example, there is a tawiz to win a cricket match. The compiler of the book, before telling about the tawiz, writes that once there was a cricket match between the high school teams of Meerath and Brailly. As the Brailly team was weak, there was no chance of it winning. When some people appraoched Ahmad Raza Khan, he asked them to recite a prayer which would ensure their victory. The amal proved effective and the team won against Meerath. The amal or the prayer is in the third volume of the collection and the Pakistani cricket team can take advantage of it.

There are also a number of tawiz which guide a person on how to kill his enemies or to overpower them.

As far as the use of amulets is concerned there are two groups of ulema: First, those who oppose their use; and the second, those who persuade their followers to use them for every problem. The amulet is very popular in the rural areas where there are no hospitals and people are too poor to travel to cities to consult doctors. Tawiz is accessible to them. They are used for social problems as there is no satisfactory solution: an amil's business thrives on the issues of marriage; on the wish to have a son and win an angry husband's love.

For the cure of disease, people may slowly turn towards doctors or quacks; but for social problems as there is no hope of any change, the business of an amil, or belief in tawiz will remain unchanged.

Ulema and the "Madrassa"

Before the institution of the madrassa, religious teaching was imparted either at the house of a teacher or at the mosque. Mostly, it was privately arranged and seldom did the religious scholar get state patronage. However, it was regarded an act of piety to support religious teaching; therefore, wealthy merchants, nobles, and officials offered financial help to religious scholars.

When the provincial independent dynasties emerged in the eastern part of the caliphate, the new rulers needed trained ulema to fill the posts of "qaziz" "muftis", and "sadrs". To fulfil this demand, the institution of "madrassa" came into existence. It is said that the first madrassa was established in Khurasan and later on this tradition was emulated in other parts of the Muslim world.

As a madrassa had its own building, staff members and hostel for students, such a large establishment could not be administered without the support of the state. Thus, by establishing this institution, the state controlled not only religious teachings but used the services of the ulema in its interests.

The first and foremost function of these madrassas was to train students in Muslim jurisprudence in order to fill judicial posts. Soon the madrassas specialised in the four schools of Sunni jurisprudence and became the custodians of Sunni orthodoxy.

The Fatimid Caliphate (909-1171), on the other hand, laid the foundation of Al-Azhar as a centre of religious teachings to train the missionary ulema to counter Sunni orthodoxy and preach the Shia faith. The state fully patronised Al-Azhar and appointed the reputed ulema to teach there. For nearly 200 years, Al-Azhar remained a centre of Shia religious teachings and its trained missionaries spread throughout the Muslim world to convert people in their beliefs. These missionaries excelled in the art of preaching. By converting people, their secret and zealous religious activities threatened the Sunni world.

To counter them, the Saljuq prime minister, Nizamul Mulk (d.1092) started a chain of madrassas known as the Nizamiyya. They were established in all important cities such as Baghdad, Nishapur, Herat, Isfahan, and Mosal. Imamn Ghazali (d.1111) the renowned religious scholar was appointed the principal of the Baghdad madrassa. The main emphasis of the madrassa Nizamiyya was on the Hanafi and Shafi jurisprudence and it trained ulema to face the challenges of the Shia, the Ismaily, and the Qaramti movement and to counter their religious teachings.

These religious conflicts, on both sides, were partronised by the state which enabled the ulema to raise their social status in society. They emerged as a powerful class conscious of its powers. As rightly guided people, they regarded it their duty and responsibility to supervise the state and its institutions and check the morals of the people.

However, the madrassa, on the one hand, organised its pupils as a class; but on the other hand, they lost their freedom and became the servants of the state.

Moreover, as these madrassas multiplied the number of ulema, increased. The jobless ulema then indulged in different religious conflicts and intensified sectarian hatred.

Later on there emerged two groups of ulema: the ulema occupying higher official posts and upholding the status quo; while the other group, deprived of political and social privileges, opposed the ruling elite, including the state-patronised ulema for violating religious sanctity and flouting the Shariat. To seek moral and material support, these ulema turned towards the people and mobilised them on religious issues. Thus, there emerged two groups of ulema: the "ulema-i-haq" or the rightly guided ulema; and the "ulema-i-su" or the worldly and opportunist ulema. However, it remained difficult to demarcate the lines between these two kinds of ulema because everybody called his opponents "ulema-i-su".

What is Dars-e-Nizamiya?

When the ulema were incorporated in the administration of justice and became a part of the state structure, they were required to get an education which could help them to cope with the administrative problems; Nizam al-Mulk Tusi (d.1092), the Saljug Wazir, organised a madrassa system which produced ulema of such skill. The model was later on adopted by most of the Muslim Kingdoms.

In India, this model was modified and reshaped by Mulla Nizam al-Din (d 1748) who was from the Farangi Mahal family and whose reputation as a teacher and scholar excelled in India. The syllabus which he prepared is known as the Dars-i-Nizamiyya.

The main purpose of the Dars-i-Nizamiyya was to prepare students for the posts of Qazis, Muftis, and other religious affairs which were required by the Muslim states of India. The characteristic of the syllabus was that instead of intensive study of important subjects, it relied on abridgement which consequently reduced the duration of the course and a student completed it at the age of twenty years.

In the madrassa syllabus, the courses were divided into two categories: Ma'qulat, i.e., knowledge based on reasoning; and Manqulat, i.e. knowledge based on traditions. The Dars-i-Nizamiyya stressed on Ma'qulat rather than Manqulat and thus emphasised the subjects which were required in worldly affairs. Moreover, for the first time, it recommended books of the Indian ulema besides the Arab and Persian scholars.

The Dars became popular in the Indian sub-continent because of its practical value: its duration was short and it assured jobs. For nearly one hundred years, the syllabus was not changed and continued to be taught in the madaras. Though times have changed, even today it is taught in most of the madaras with some modifications.

The important subjects which were included in the Dars were: Principles of Jurisprudence (fiqh); dialectics and scholastics (kalam); metaphysics (hikmat); Logic (mantiq); Mathematics (riazi); rhetoric (balaghat); grammar and syntax (sarf-o-nahw); and Hadith.

Shah Walliullah (d.1762) and his family founded the madrassa of Rahimiyya and introduced a different syllabus from the Nizamiyya. It laid more stress on Manqulat and instead of jurisprudence, emphasised the study of the Tafzir and Hadith. Shah Walliullah envisaged the role of ulema as state officials as well as teachers and guardians of the cultural heritage. In political anarchy, he was more concerned to preserve the religious identity of the Muslims.

Thus, there emerged two different curricula according to the need of time: the Farangi Mahal produced religious officers for the Muslim states. As Metcalf points out: "Whenever there was a prince, the Farangi Mahallis sought a position under him. The madrassa Rahimiyya was concerned to revive and reform Islam.

This model was adopted by the Deoband madrassa which was founded in 1867. The founders of Deoband were more concerned to face the onslaught of the British influence than to prepare students for jobs. Keeping in view the new situation they designed courses which included grammar, prosody and literature, history of Islam, logic, Greco-Arab philosophy, kalam, dialectics, disputation, medieval geometry and astronomy, Greco-Arab medicine, jurispudence, Hadiths, and tafsir. Later on logic and philosophy were dropped from the syllabus. Although the founders of the madrassa aimed at preparing students with a new outlook, yet the subjects show that there was nothing new in the syllabus except to produce traditional teachers and preachers.

The result was that the students after completing their studies, failed to adjust to changing circumstances. There were few options left for these students. Either they could join the Muslim courts as religious officials; or become teachers and preachers, Imams and muezzins. This reduced the scope of their livelihood. To overpower this problem, they had to find other ways.

The Ulema and Western Civilisation

In the Muslim world, the process of westernisation started after colonisation, which not only challenged the indigenous culture but also wiped out some deep-rooted traditions. So, it appeared as an anti-local culture and an enemy of the traditional system. Even after liberation from colonial domination, the threat from the west to uproot local traditions and values remains alive.

The ulema, who were hard hit by the process of weternisation during the colonial period, developed a mechanism to resist new trends in order to restore their status in society. Adopting an anti-western attitude, they contended that it was an alien ideology, atheistic, and thus antithetical to Islamic teachings.

Further, the ulema defined western civilization as immoral because it allowed free mixing of both sexes and violated ethical and moral values. Faraq Abdus-Salam an Egyptian religious scholar, condemning western civilization, writes, "They even make prostitution, atheism, nudism, and also abortion and the taking of interest, legal. Distinctions are no longer made between monotheists and atheists, between the church-builder and the builder of brothels."

Their criticism against western civilization was based on their moral outlook. Interestingly, when some of them visited the western countries and found cleanliness, discipline, and honesty in daily life, they claimed that the west was following the teachings of Islam which were abandoned by Muslims themselves. Thus, they gave no credit to western civilisations and attributed all its virtues to Islam.

Moreover, the meaning of westernisation or modernization has now become derogatory. In Urdu, the phrase "Maghrabzada" or "influenced by the west", is used as an insult. Those who are westernized are isolated and treated as outsiders. They are regarded as outcasts and betrayers who left their own culture. Women struggling for there rights are dubbed "Maghrabzada Khwateen" or "westernized women" who are rebels and are asking for something which is not in their own culture.

Similarly, an attempt to introduce democracy, secularism, human rights and enlighenment is criticised as an attempt to disturb the indigenous system and create disorder and anarchy. Unfortunately, the ulema in these efforts are supported by some European intellectuals who monopolise the values and traditions of the Enlightenment and the French Revolution.

They present these values as being only of western civilization and their adoption by Asian and African countries as the triumph of the west.

Bassam Tibi rightly condemns this attitude of European intellecuals in his book "The Crisis of Modern Islam" (1988). He writes that the principles of the Enlightenment and the French Revolution "can no longer be regarded as something peculiarly European;

they are universal and no longer restricted to a specific national culture. To deny this would be tantamount to asserting that basic human rights, as developed for the first time in human history and established as supreme values during the European enlightenment, are solely European."

By criticising Western civilization and warning people about its dangers, the ulema argue that the Muslims would lose their identity and integrate in a culture which is alien to their own. While "Westernisation is by no means synonymous with cultural loss or even cultural death", writes an African scholar.

However, the opposition to western civilization is only in the realm of ideas, values and traditions; western technology, which provides comfort and facility, is not opposed and is adopted without observing where it is made by all sections of our society, including the ulema, who love to use loudspeakers for their sermons and cassettes and videos for the propagation of their sectarian teachings.

Ulema and the West

When the British introduced technology and its instruments to facilitate the working of the government and to rule over the country efficiently, they brought significant changes in the social and cultural patterns of Indian society. As the ulema were not well-versed in science and technology, and did not understand the working of these instruments and inventions, they opposed them and exhorted their fellow Muslims not to use them as they were against religion, but, as the utility of these technological inventions was accepted by people the ulema also succumbed to their use.

Though the ulema are still not aware of the working of most of the technological inventions, they have fully realised their utility to use them for the propogation of their ideas. Loudspeakers, which were once declared un-Islamic, are widely misused by the clerics. Every mosque is decorated by four to six loudspeakers for the communication of their sermons not only for those who are in the mosque but also for those who are in their homes.

Cassettes and videos are the other two new inventions widely used by religious leaders and parties. Their message is sent to every nook and corner of the country with the help of these two valuable inventions.

Cassettes and videos played a significant role in the Iranian Revolution by conveying the sermons and speeches of Imam Khomeini to the people of Iran.

In Europe, science and technology is linked with intellectual advancement. Therefore, every invention fulfils some social, cultural, industrial, or commercial needs of the society. In an intellectual society, they are symbols of progress. The same inventions in a backward society are used by reactionary social and cultural forces to deepen their influence. Thus, they help to make society more backward.

This is the reason that on the one hand they accept technology and use it for their comfort and for the propagation of their ideas, but on the other hand, they oppose all such western concepts, ideas, and movements which caused scientific development in the west and produced these inventions: such as democracy, liberalism, modernism, secularism, rationalism socialism, nationalism and humanism.

In Europe, it was impossible for scientists to work freely and independently without democracy and secularism. Without tolerance and freedom, nothing can be achieved scientifically or intellectually.

Interestingly, our ulema are ready to accept European technology but are opposed to western culture and its concepts without realising that both go together and are inseparable. Reliance on western technology would finally make them subordinate to Europe. No indigenous technology can be developed without free thinking and a rational approach.

In most Muslim countries, the colonial powers left behind some democratic institutions. Instead of being strengthened they are some-times misused by political leaders and sometimes by the army. Religious parties have opposed them from the beginning. In some cases, as in Algeria, they have tried to use these democratic institutions to seize power, vowing to destory them after assuming power to establish a one-party government.

Although the ulema oppose western culture and education, those who are at the top of leadership, send their children to English-medium schools and to the US and European and modern education for their children is not considered harmful. It is poisonous for the common people. If somebody investigates this aspect, it will reveal startling facts.

What is inferred from these arguments is that the use of modern technology is making our society more backward; the opposition to a western educations only for the masses in order to keep them ignorant and is exploit them while their children get a western education for a successful and prosperous life.

Ulema and the Socio-political Issues

With the foundation of the Sultanate Kingdom in India, the ulema made attempts to pressurise the sultans to reformulate their state policies under their instructions. The sultans fully realised the problems of politics, heard their sermons, but avoided implementing them. In the first phase of their rule, the contacts between Muslims and Hindus were not intimate and culturally both differed with each other. However, to assert the supremacy of the Muslims, the ulema repeatedly demanded to keep the Hindus in low status and did not allow them to openly celebrate their religious rituals and festivals.

However, when the local people started to convert, they brought along with them a number of customs, rituals and traditions. This transformation of Muslim society activated the ulema who expressed their consternation. According to the point of view of the ulema, things further deteriorated when the Mughals, under Akbar, began the process of Indianisation, and most of the Indian festivals and customs became common among Hindus and Muslims alike. Since then, the exclusion of Hindu cultural traditions from Muslim society became the top priority issue on the agenda of the ulema.

The second problem arose during the rule of the Mughals when the number of Shias increased and monopolised the Shia-Sunni conflict. The power of the Shias further strengthened during the later Mughals when some Shia nobles usurped political power and virtually ruled over the Empire. The foundation of the Oudh state, dominated by the Shias, threathened the Sunni ulema and this triggered a polemical war between the two sects. As the ulema on both sides defended the beliefs of their sects, it enhanced their status and gained them respect among the people.

After British conquest, the ulema were confronted with quite a different problem. How to determine the status of Hindustan after losing political power? Call it Dar-al-Harb (place of war)? In case of Dar-al-Harb, there were two choices for the Muslims: either to migrate to another country which was Dar-al-Islam or to declare jihad (holy war) against foreign rule. If the Muslims decided to stay in India, whether they would be allowed to accept employment under the British?

These problems divided the ulema into a number of groups and they issued fatwas (religious injunctions) according to their vested interest. For example, the ulema from the family of Shah Waliullah were of the opinion that India was Dar-al-Harb, but the migration was not obligatory. They also issued fatwas allowing Muslims to learn English. When Maulwi Abdul Hai got employment in the East India Company, he was not deterred from doing so. Another alim, Shah Ghulam Ali, opposed it and criticised the policy of collaborating with the British, but Shah Abdul Aziz, the head of the Waliullah family, argued that the Qazi and the Mufti were such highly respectable religious posts that whatever authoity employed them, it should be accepted in order to serve the cause of religion.

Thus, the ulema in India gradually involved themselves in a number of socio-economic and political problems from the time of the sultanate to British rule. They, instead of solving these problems, made them more complicated. The result was that, as the number of problems increased, the ulema deepened their authority in Muslim society, and with the passage of time, tried to assume the role of leaders.

The Ulema and Hindu Customs

The Indian ulema repeatedly exhorted the Muslims against adopting Hindu ceremonies, learning anything about their religion and languages and sharing neither food nor drink with them. As a matter of fact, the question of Muslim identity was pre-eminent for the ulema because, in case of cultural amalgamation, there were fears of the disappearance of the Muslim minority. Moveover, the close cultural relationship of the two communities was not in the interest of the ulema because their status and domination depended on the concept of a separate religious identity for the Muslims.

The ulema opposed two kinds of Hindu cultural rituals and cermonies: fist those which were a part of cultural and social festivals, such as occasions of birth, marriage, and death; the second were an outcome of socio-economic conditions.

It is human nature to find ways and means to enjoy and get pleasure from different sources. Festivals and ceremonies provide a society occasion to express the joy and forget day-to-day problems. As most of the Arab festivals were not charming and failed to provide enough opportunities to revel and make merry, the converted Muslims of Iran and India kept the festivals and ceremonies which were observed by their ancestors.

For example, the Muslim Kings of Iran and India celebrated the festival of Nauroz with great enthusiasm. Similarly, the Muslim nobility and people continued the practice of celebrating Hindu festivals such as Holi, Desehra, and Diwalai. In some cases, they imitated Hindu festivals and adopted their practices, such as the burning of lamps on the occasion of Shab-i-Barat like Diwali; and demonstration of skill of swordsmanship and other martial arts on the occasion of Moharram. In the ceremony of marriage, a number of Indian customs were adopted by the Muslims, which made the occasion very colourful and charming.

Sayyid Ismael Shaheed gives in detail the Indian and un-Islamic customs in his book Taqwiyat al-Iman, which were prevalent among Muslims in his time. For example, to have beards, to embrace on the occasion of Eid, to burn lamps on the Shab-i-Barat, to build Taziyas, to pay respect to the foot impression of the Holy Prophet (PBUH), to sacrifice a goat on the occasion of the birth of a boy, to celebrate circumcision, to arrange dancing parties, to wear red clothes, to mourn on Moharram, to hold Milads in the month of Rabi-ul-Awwal, to cook "siwiyan" on Eid, to shake hands with each other, to like music, to have pride in the family lineage, to spend more on marriages, to pay high amounts of Mihr, and to greet each other by saying "Adab" and not "Assalam-o-Alaikum".

Besides these un-Islamic rituals and ceremonies there were other kinds of customs which were popular as a result of lack of education and superstitions. He gives their details as such: to pray for the dead in order to fulfil wishes, to believe that some days were good and some bad, to make pilgrimage to the tombs of saints, to offer chadar and to burn lamps on the graves, and to prohibit widow marriage.

Sayyid Ismael Shaheed strongly criticised the practice of visiting the tombs of saints and calling them for help in worldly affairs or to pray to them to play an intermediary role between an individual and God.

It is evident from the writings of Ismael Shaheed that in the 17th and 18th centuries, the practice of visiting the tombs of holy men and seeking their help was common. As a matter of fact, this attitude was rooted in the political system of the Indian subcontinent. In kingship, ordinary people were not allowed to have access to the ruler. They had to approach him through some noble or high ranking official.

The common people adopted the same process and sought the help of saints and holy men to recommend their cases to God. As the belief in the power of the saints was useful for the mystics, they fully exploited it in order to get gifts and presents in the shape of offerings and to establish high status in society. That was the reason that the number of sufis increased incredibly in the later Mughal period. They attempted to impress people by their personal appearance with long hair, unusual dressses, and miracles in the company of the disciples.

People believed in their supernatural powers as they were affected by political anarchy, insecurity, poverty, hunger, and insoluble problems. The result was that the people sought from their spiritual powers to solve their problems and the sufis, by exploiting their weakness, amassed wealth from the rich and poor alike.

Ismael Shaheed and other reformists failed to understand the socio-economic conditions of their age and, as a result of it, the behaviour and psyche of the people. Therefore, mere preaching and prohibition failed to change the situation. This created an uproar against them which turned into great polemic.

Ulema and Science

The establishment of British rule in India not only changed the social and economic structure of society, it also introduced new scientific technology and inventions. The attitude of the Europeans and Indians towards technology differed. In Europe, scientific changed occurred along with intellectual development. New inventions were accepted without any challenge. In India, on the contrary, scientific inventions and new technology were imported from Europe; therefore, there was strong resistance in accepting them and using them in daily life.

The ulema especially opposed all scientific inventions introduced in India and suspected that they would weaken religious beliefs and convert Muslims to Christianity. Moreover, as these ulema were the product of an outdated and backward system of education, they failed to understand the significance of science and technology in the development of society. Every new thing appeared to them as a threat to religion. They were so accustomed to old traditions that anything which caused a change made them afraid.

This attitude of the ulema is fully reflected in the collection of fatwas, especially Fatawa-i-Darul-Ulum Deoband, which issued such collections from time to time to guide the Muslims in solving the problems of their daily life in the light of religion. The Fatawa-i-Rashidiya is the collection of the fatwas of Maulana Rashid Ahmad Gangohi. It is a good example for examining the response of the ulema to new changes. For example, he forbade the use of the English hat and cap and opposed any photograph either by an artist or photographer. He condemned the use of photographs for decoration. Religiously they were lawful only when it was put in a dirty place. Even for medical or war purposes their use was not allowed.

In the case of medical study, the pictures of different parts of the human body had to be used. He declared it a grave sin to photograph or to draw a human figure. He allowed only four kinds of pictures: a picture without ahead; a picture which was placed in a dirty spot; a small picture which could not be recognised when lying on the floor; and dolls for children. He opposed pictures of animals and, if at all required, they could be drawn without heads.

Regarding sports, he issued different fatwas. According to one of his fatwas, if the purpose of the game was entertainment, then it was unlawful; if it was played for the purpose of exercise and health, only then was it allowed. However, he forbade football because it was played wearing shorts which was shameful. Therefore, all games which hindered praying were un-Islamic.

He totally condemned work in or visit to the cinema, theatre, or any dancing or music group. After the introduction of the radio, he issued a fatwa that to hear song and music from the radio was wrong and it was again a great sin to hear the recitation of the Quran from the radio. To hear the recitation of the Quran from the gramophone was also declared unalwful.

He also vehemently opposed all new fashions. Women were warned not to adopt modern dresses or shoes.

In the Fatawa-i-Rashidiya, there is also a strong reaction against social and economic changes. For example, to send money by money order, and to keep an account in the bank was declared against the Shariat. There were also fatwas against the use of loudspeakers, travel by train, visit to the hospital, new medicines, European dress, and eating with a fork and knife.

However, in spite of all these fatwas and the opposition of the ulema, these new scientific and technological inventions were accepted by the society as they provided comfort. Even the ulema slowly accepted their use and issued new fatwas to adjust religion according to modern needs. This proves that science and its inventions have more power and capability to defeat superstitions and out-dated beliefs.

The Ulema and Social Reform

Christian missionaries arrived in India after East India Company's drive to convert Indians to Christianity. Such attempts were made long before by the Portuguese, who, after gaining some foothold on the Indian coastlines, made attempts to forcibly convert the local population; but this made them very unpopular and they had to retreat under pressure from the French and the British.

In the beginning, the Company refrained from interfering in the religious affaris of the Indians; the missionaries were not allowed to preach. However, later on, when the Company stabilised as a political power, it allowed the missionaries to come and preach openly. The permission opened the gates to different Christian missions and soon in every part of India these missions established their offices.

The significant aspect of these missions was that they combined social work with preaching. First they concentrated their attention on establishing schools and hospitals for the poor and the needy. This type of social work was quite new to the Indians because, so far, the poor and the needy were supported out of kindness and not on the basis of humanity. A rich person gave charity in order to gain popularity as a generous person. There were no institutions which could look after education, health, and solve the financial and social problems of the poor.

Keeping in view the work of the Christian missionaries, the question arises: Why didn't the ulema follow the same policy? Why did they remain aloof from social work? The answer lies in the origin of the two religions. Christianity originated under the shadow of the Roman empire and attracted only the poor and the powerless to the solace of the new religion. On the other hand, Islam was the religion of the conquerors; so it was the need of the conquered non-Muslims and, not of the conquerors, to accept Islam. Islam did not spread by the sword. People became Muslims to obtain political, social and economic benefits.

Under these circumstances, during the colonial period, the ulema's responsibility was to defend their religion against the aggressiveness of the missionaries. Therefore, a number of organisations emerged whose main task was to revive religious rituals and to presuade people to observe them. They established "madaras" to fulfil this objective. In the "madrassa" only religious education was imparted and no secular subjects were taught that enable to people to earn their livelihood. In Deoband, an attempt was made to train students in different professions but this was not liked by the religious scholars who regarded it beneath their dignity to adopt any profession except the post of Imam or Khatib.

Moreover, our ulema, believing themselves to be the custodians of religion and experts on religious matters, look down upon the people and regard them as irreligious and illiterate. Social work has no place in their programme. They expect that people should serve them as inferiors serve superiors. Believing religion and politics as inseparable, the ulema took keen interest in politics and during the colonial period, not only joined other political parties but organised their own.

They mobilised people on the basis of religion and tried to win their support to achieve political ends.

The same policy was allowed by the ulema after partition. In Pakistan, the ulema belonging to different sects formed their own separate political parties in order to gain political power. All religious parties raise the slogan of "Islam in danger" but they never bother about the misery and plight of the masses.

The Ulema and Education

In Muslim society, the ulema remained the custodians of education. They were granted jagirs and scholarships to establish madrassas and to impart education to children. The main concern of the ulema was not to educate the youngsters to respond to challenges but to keep religious beliefs protected. Therefore, their approach towards education was to teach subjects which strengthened the faith and excluded all those secular subjects which created doubt and questions.

In India, throughout Muslim rule, the ulema continued to dominate educational institutions, producing students who were not aware of changes. The same policy was continued after the rule of the East India Company began and subjects which threatened the established view, were totally banned. Philosophy was one of them. The principal of the Deoband Seminary, Maulana Rashid Ahmad Gangohi excluded philosophy from the syllabus and strcitly prohibited his students to study it.

Although Deoband was established after the advent of British rule, instead of accepting new changes and adjusting accordingly, it made attempts to preserve the old status of society. This was reflected in its educational policy and syllabus which was modelled on the Dars-i-Nizamiya. It was prepared in the 18th century and contained Arabic Language and Grammer, Logic, Jurisprudence, Arithmetic, Hadith, tafsir, and al-Kalam. The same subjects were included in the syllabus without realising whether they could be useful in the changed circumstances.

No attempt was made to teach Islamic history, the history of Hindustan or geography and science. Mushir al-Haq, commenting on this syllabus, in his book Muslims in Modern India, writes that no emphasis was given to modern science. Students were not taught Indian or European languages, nor English which had become the second language of India. There was no arrangement to teach the history of the world. Even the history of India was not in the curriculum. Geography and other social sciences were not taught at all.

The whole educational syllabus was confined only to Islamic studies. Students remained completely unaware of the modern world and had no knowledge about other nations. This was the policy and attitude of Deoband; and all other religious schools, such as Firangi Mahal and Mazahir ul-Ulum, followed the same policy.

The result was that graduates from these schools passed out without knowing the new world. Mentally and intellectually they belonged to the medieval period. It was difficult for them to be useful in society. With only religious knowledge, they could not apply for any job in modern administration, could not adopt any profession, and could not be absorbed in the changing set-up of the colonial period.

The only choice for them was either the madrassa or the mosque. Therefore, they continuously tried to set up new madrassas and to build new mosques because these were the only institutions which provided them with a livelihood.

But these institutions could not offer them good salaries as they were financed by public donations. Therefore, economic backwardness created in them a sense of deprivation. Consequently, they opposed everything which was modern and beyond their reach.

Thus, the anti-western attitude of the ulema prevented Muslim society from adopting modern ideas and use them in their practical life. This made the society dogmatic, conservative, and backward.

The Ulema and their Concept of the Islamic State

After the creation of Pakistan, there arose a conflict between the secular-oriented politicians and the ulema on the question of the nature of the state: Should it be on the basis of nationalism-secularism with equal rights to all citizens regardless of their religion, or should it be a state on the Islamic model? The founder of Pakistan, Quaid-i-Azam, just before Partition, clearly explained the nature of the state of Pakistan in an interview with Doon Campbell, Reuter's correspondent, that the new state would be a democratic state with equal rights to all its citizens. He reiterated the same views in his speech to the Constituent Assembly on August 11, 1947.

However, the ulema refused this model and wished to structure the new state on the principles of Islam as was promised to the Muslims of the subcontinent and for which they had sacrificed. Maulana Amin Ahsan Islahi, giving his statement to Justice Munir, asserted that "the Quaid-i-Azam's conception of the modern national state became obsolete with the passing of the Objectives Resolution in March 1949".

Justice Munir in his report exposes the differences, disagreements, and contradictions in the model of the Islamic state, when he asks the question: which was the ideal period when the Islamic state fully functioned. The ulema differed and some of them held up the government during the Holy Prophet's time as an example. Some extended it up to the period of the four orthodox caliphs; some included the reign of Umar b. Abdul Aziz; and some further extended it to the periods of Salahuddin Ayubi, Mahmud of Ghazna, Muhammad b. Tughlaq, and Aurangzeb.

In spite of this contradiction and confusion, the ulema insisted that the details of an ideal state would be worked out by them. After interviewing different ulema, Justice Munir assimilated their views and concluded that if Pakistan is intended to be converted to an Islamic state, its constitution must contain the following provisions:

1. That all laws to be found in the Quran and Sunnah shall be deemed to be a part of the law of the land;

2. Any provision in the constitution which is repugnant to the Quran and Sunnah should be deleted;

3. That any provision of international law or treaty which is contrary to the Quran or Sunnah shall not be binding on any Muslim in Pakistan.

Keeping this mode, Justice Munir rightly observed that when the sovereignty of the people was denied in the provisions of the constitution, the country could not be called democratic. "Indeed if the masses are expressly disqualified from taking part in it because Ijam-i-Ummat in Islamic jurisprudence is restricted to the ulema and mujtahids of acknowledged status and does not at all extend, as in a democracy, to the populace".

However, to give it democratic colour, the terms of the Islamic state were interpreted in modern usage such that Shura has become the parliament or assembly; the amir, president or head of the state; Arbab-i-Hal wa-Aqd, are advisors; and Ijma is public opinion, etc.

The Ulema and the Process of Islamisation

Although, the leading ulema and religious parties, such as the Jamiat Ulema-i-Hind, Jama'at-i-Islami and Majlis-i-Ahrar, opposed the Muslim League and the idea of Pakistan, the Muslim League fully ultilised the religious sentiments of the Muslims which were provoked during the Khilafat movement. However, the Muslim League needed the support of the ulema to give a religious colour to its demands and to get their endorsement on political decisions. When Maulana Shabbir Ahmad Usmani was won over by the League, the Jamiat Ulema-i-Islam was organised in 1945 to counter the Jamiat Ulema-i-Hind. Though the JUI contained ulema of lesser status, it, however, provided an effective weapon to the League to Islamise political issues.

In 1946, the League formed a committee of mashaikh to enlist the support of the masses. Finding not many mashaikh, as Saleem M.Qureshi writes in his article "Religion and Politics in Pakistan," "Men like Nawab Mamdot, Sir Feroz Khan Noon, Sardar Shaukat Hayat Khan, and others, who had not been known for their religiosity were given religious titles such as Pir Mamdot Sharif, Darbar Sarghoda Sharif, etc."

The League, in this way, effectively used the ulema, mashaikh, and the religious sentiments of the masses to achieve its political ends. However, after parition, the situation totally changed. Now, it was the turn of the ulema to pressurise the government to accept their demands and make Pakistan a true Islamic state by implementing the Shariah. Maulana Shabbir Ahmad Usmani immediately after the formation of Pakistan, demanded that all key posts and important offices should be given only to the Muslims. All cultural Muslims and non-Muslims should be excluded from such posts. He also criticised the League for discarding the ulema after using them for winning Pakistan. He demanded of the governement to form a committee of ulema to prepare a draft of the constitution. Later on a committee of ulema was formed and, on the deliberations of the committee, the Objectives Resolution was announced in 1949. The resolution declares that "Sovereignty over the entire universe belongs to God Almighty alone,"and that the state shall exercise its power and authority through the chosen representatives of the people."

The committee further recommended the presidential system; the president should be a Muslim and male; women were excluded from the post of the presidency; they were not allowed to contest in elections for the legislature; if allowed, their age should be fifty years and they must be purdah-observing. Thus, the ulema, through the committee, asserted their authority in Constitution-making, with the result that all the constitutions of 1956, 1962, and 1973 contain the Islamic provisions in spite of their secular character. Every constitution contains three main important Islamic features: the name of the country is the Islamic Republic of Pakistan; Ayub Khan who deleted it, was forced to include it later on; the head of the state should be a Muslim; and no law repugnant to the Quran and Sunnah should be passed.

During the period of Ayub Khan, though the ulema were not successful in their demand to repeal the Muslim Family Laws ordinance 1961, they forced the government to form a Ruat-i-Hilal Committeee consisting of ulema to declare Eid. They also successfully campaigned against Fazlur Rehman, the director of the Islamic Research Institute and forced him to resign from his post. This slow politicisation of religion strengthened the position of the ulema and made them very active in politics.

Z.A. Bhutto, during his tenure, made a compromise with the demands of the ulema and by establishing the Ministry of Religious Affairs, succumbed to their pressure. However, the pinnacle period of the ulema was during Zia-lu-Haq's reign who accelerated the process of Islamisation. The present government is also following the same policy and is heavily relying on the ulema for religious support.

The brief history of Pakistan clearly shows the steady progress of the ulema. The secular leadership of Pakistan repeatedly tried to meet some of the demands of the religious parties in order to get their support. As a result, they sacrificed the democratic institutions and secular values. The situation had reached a point that all politicians and political parties are pawns in the hands of the ulema; and all political, social and economic issues are interpreted in religious terms and require authority from the ulema on how to handle them.

The Ulema and Religious Minorities

In a modern nation state, the building of a nation is based on common history, language, and geographical boundaries. Every member of a nation is given full citizenship to participate in all affairs of state and society; there is no discrimination on the basis of religion. Keeping in view this concept, Justice Munir interviewed different ulema and asked them about the status of religious minorities in an Islamic state.

The consensus of the ulema was that the non-Muslims should have the status of Zimmis, not full citizens of Pakistan, and would have no right to hold high public offices. Maulana Abdul Hasanat, in response to this question, replied:

"Their position will be that of Zimmis. They will have no voice in the making of laws, no right to administer the law and no right to hold public offices."

When Maulana Hamid Badayuni was asked to comment on the speech of Quaid-e-Azam delivered in the Constituent Assembly on August 11, 1947 declaring Muslims, Hindus and Christians equal citizens, the Maulana replied: "I accept the principle that all communities, whether Muslims or non-Muslims should have, according to their population, proper representation in the administration of the state and legislation, except that non-Muslims cannot be taken in the army, or judiciary, or be appointed as ministers or to other posts involving the reposing of confidence."

According to the Maulana, the non-Muslims of Pakistan are not Zimmis, because the land was not conquered by the Muslims; nor is there any agreement concluded with them; therefore, they are not citizens of an Islamic state.

If non-Muslim minorities have no right in an Islamic country, what about Muslim minorities in a non-Muslim country? When the Munir Commission asked this question, Maulana Ataullah Bokhari replied: "It is not possible that a Mussalman should be a faithful citizen of a non-Muslim government. On the question: "Will it be possible for the four crore Indian Muslims to be faithful citizens of their state?" The Maulana curtly said "No."

On the question, "Will you permit Hindus to base their constitution on their own religion?" Maulana Abul Ala Maududi replied, "Certainly, I should have no objection even if the Muslims of India are treated in that form of government as Shudras and Malishes and Manu's laws are applied to them, depriving them of all share in the government and the rights of a citizen."

The Munir Commision asked another question: "What will be the duty of the Muslims in India in case of war between India and Pakistan?" On this question, Maulana Abdul Hasanat replied: "Their duty is obvious, namely, to side with us and not to fight against us on behalf of India." Maulana Maududi also responded in similar words: "Their duty is obvious, and that is not to fight against Pakistan or to do anything injurious to the safety of Pakistan."

If, on the issue of the status of religious minorities, the ulema are followed, neither non-Muslims could get any rights in Pakistan nor the Muslims of India. In both cases, religious minorities would be descriminated against, persecuted, and harassed as disloyal citizens and traitors by their respective countries. In this respect, the views of the ulema and the Hindu communalists are similar. By overlooking the human problem, both believe in discrimination on the basis of religion.

By following this discriminatory policy, we have already dissociated our religious minorities from participation in state and public affairs. Not satisfied with the existing minorities, our ulema are creating more and more of them by declaring different religious sects as non-Muslim. After the Ahmadis, Zikris and Shias are the next in line. Keeping in view this process of disintegration, the question is: Can we survive as a nation?

The Ulema's Opposition to Change

The ulema in Muslim societies formed their own distinct class but could not develop their separate institution like the church in Christianity; therefore, to assert their authority, they had to rely on the support of political power. Becoming a part of the political structure, the ulema cooperated with the ruling classes and protected their interests. Believing in the status quo, they opposed any change in society; so much that the Arabic word "bida" or "new things" has become a derogatory term signifying a change with adverse effects.

In the early phase of muslim history when the conquests of Syria, Iraq, and Iran brought new converts into the fold of Islam, they brought along with them their own cultural traditions. The ulema, at this stage protested against the assimilation of new cultural elements and attempted to retain the purity of Arab culture which was interpreted as Islamic. The result was that all intellectuals who had liberal and enlightened views were accused of being Zindiq (heretics), or the followers of Mani and Mazdak and were persecuted on charges of polluting the religion with their innovative ideas. Some of them were not only imprisoned and tortured but executed. One of them was Ibn Muqaffa, a convert from Zoroastrianism who had such command of Arabic that he corrected the mistakes of the Arab scholars.

Henceforth, the conflict between the ulema and the liberal intellectuals continued throughout Islamic history; and the ulema, with the support of the state machinery, crushed the individuals and movements which tried to fight against the status quo. Liberal ideas could flourish only when the rulers provided them state support. For example, in the case of the Mutazilla, when a rationalist movement under the patonage of the Caliph Mamun, propagated its ideas throughout the Abbasid Empire. But as soon as state support ceased after the death of Mamun, the ulema wiped out the movement.

Ibn Sina and a few others survived only because they were protected by the rulers. Otherwise they had fatwas against them. In India, during the Mughal period, Abul Fazl and his family were harassed by the ulema who accused them of holding non-traditional religious views. Their lives were saved when they got the protection of Akbar. Only under his patronage were Abul Fazl and Faizi able to contribute freely; however, the whole process of liberalism ceased as soon as Akbar died.

Not only were the liberal and enlightened ideas were suppressed; even the innovations by some religious sects were not tolerated by the ulema.

In India, Mahdi Jaunpuri, who launched a reformist and revivalist movement, was condemned and his followers were persecuted.

Threatened by the power of the ulema the rationalist movements worked secretly and circulated their writings surreptitiously, such as the works of the

Ikhawan-al-sifa, who wrote these treatises anonymously in order to escape the wrath of the ulema.

Therefore, resistance against obsolete traditions and out-dated values could not be built in the absence of state support. Liberal individuals rarely got an enlightened patron. Ibn Rushed, Farabi, Kindi, or Ibn Khaldun were exceptions who are still regarded as outcasts.

In the modern Muslim world the ulema are still powerful and enjoy state support to confront liberal ideas. As nearly all Muslims states are undemocratic, they are threatened by the process of modernization, and join the ulema to check it. Only in modern Turkey, was Mustafa Kamal bold enough to break the power of the ulema and lay down the foundation of a modern secular Turkey. His policy was followed half-heartedly by Reza Shah of Iran and Amir Habibullah of Afghanistan, but in both countries, the ulema ultimately overthrew the government.

This raises the question: Is there any possibility of change in Muslim societies? Though in the early period of history, the Umayyids and the Abbasid empires adopted Greek, Indian, and Persian cultural elements to fulfil their requirements in spite of the ulema's protest, modern Muslim states controlled by dictators and desposts, are interested in retaining the traditional system because they are afraid of democracy and secularism which are powerful ideas capable of eliminating both the rulers and the ulema.

Thus, it appears that liberal elements in Muslim societies have little or no chance to win a battle against the state and the ulema who are powerful and have common interests. Muslim societies pay heavily in retaining the status quo in the shape of people's backwardness. But who cares for the people?

The "Ummah" : an "Imagined Community"

Whenever the Muslim world faces crises and problems, the Muslim people yearn for the unity of the ummah to overcome these problems but without realizing that there had been no such unity in the past. Internally, Muslim society remained divided, though outwardly political, social, and economic interest sometimes linked it together. But as soon as these interests shifted, the unity of the these groups collapsed.

The first concept of the Islamic Ummah was based on the unity of the Arabs; but as soon as Syria, Iraq and Iran were conquered, newly converted ethnic groups wanted to join the ummah, which was strongly resisted by the Arabs who placed them on the second ladder of social status. The ethnic division was between the Arabs and the movement among the Iranians which was called "Shaubiyyah". They challenged Arab superiority and asserted their cultural identity. These nationalist sentiments did not subside even after the disappearance of Arab rule and the emergence of the Iranian and Turkish ruling dynasties in Iran and Central Asia.

Firdausi's "Shahnama" is the hallmark of Iranian nationalism. He, in his Epic, traced the legendary history of the Persian Kings and contemptuously referred to the Arab conquest of Iran. Because of its nationalist texture, the "Shahnama" became the Bible of the Iranian people.

The Iranians, to counter Arab cultural superiority, glorified their Cultural achievements. Maulana Rumi's "Mathnawi" is called "the Quran in Persian language" (Quran dar Zaban-i-Pahlawi). The Iranian intellectuals revived the old Persian myths and legends and asserted their own separate identity. In spite of one religion, the Arabs and the Iranians remained poles apart.

The same process continued in other ethnic groups and nations which were converted to Islam but retained their indigenous traditions. Thus, Islam developed in a different cultural milieu which changed its form and shape. Today there are dozens of variations of Islam in Muslim countries. Each Muslim country has its own identity and is not ready to sacrifice it and merge it in the greater Muslim identity.

During colonisation, when most of the Muslim countries came under the domination of western powers, the Pan-Islamic movement was launched to unite the Muslims in order to struggle against European domination. As the Ottoman Empire controlled the Arab world, this ideology suited its interests. The Ottoman administration supported al-Afhani in his efforts to unite the Muslim countries under the banner of Islam, which meant the rule of the Ottomans over the Arab world.

However, Pan-Islamism did not suit Arab designs, who wanted liberation from the Ottomans. Pan-Islamism provided them no chance to rebel and fight against the Muslim Caliph; therefore, they abandoned it and adopted nationalism, a western imported concept which inspired them to struggle for their freedom.

After the second world war, when the era of colonisation came to and end, independent Muslim countries emerged as nation-states. With the new concept of nation and nation-state, a process of nation-making was started in Muslim countries which identified themselves as Iraqis, Egyptians, or Moroccans rather than Muslim. Their religious identity was relegated to a secondary position.

As each nation has its own interests, she is not ready to sacrifice it in the interest of others. When Sadaat realised that the peace treaty with Israel was beneficial for Egypt, he concluded it in spite of Arab nationalists and Muslim fundamentalists. Syria, Jordan and other Arab countries are ready to abandon the cause of Palestine and make peace with Israel.

Thus, the concept of "ummah" is merely based on our sentiments and emotions. It is an imagined community which never existed in reality.

THE SUFIS

Sufi Saints and Politics

After the martydom of Hazrat Uthman (d.656), Muslim society was divided into a number of groups based on political and ideological diversities. The split was further deepened when Hazrat Ali (d.661) and Hazrat Muawiyya (d.661) fought against each other and as a result of the civil wars, and political differences, two strong tendencies emerged in society.

There was a group which wanted to take active part in politics and support either side in order to settle the dispute. The other group was so disillusioned by the manipulation, that they favoured complete isolation from politics and the abandonment of worldly affairs.

The second group thus separated religion from politics and devoted its time to the service of religion. The ulema who belonged to this group refused to accept any government job or state grant, and looked down upon those colleagues who served the government in any capacity.

The concept of the separation of politics from religion was further strengthened in Muslim society when the sufi saints acquired a significant position and condemned any involvement in political activities. They, as a matter of principle, adopted a policy of keeping themselves away from the rulers and their courts, and they refused to make any social contact with them; or to accept any position in the administration.

They never made attempts, in general, to encourage any conspiracy, intrigue,or rebelliin against the ruler. As the sufi saints remained away from politics, they did not come into conflict with the rulers. They were forced to take part were in some political conflicts, otherwise, they always emphasized loyalty to the ruler.

One of the examples is Khwaja Nizamuddin (d.1325) who maintained good and friendly relations with all the rulers of his time. When a converted Muslim, Khusrau Khan, ascended the throne after the assassination of Qutbuddin Khilji (d.1316), Nizamuddin Aulia accepted the gifts which were sent by him. The same policy was followed by his beloved disciple Amir Khusrau (d.1325) who faithfully served all the sultans.

This attitude is fully reflected in the writings of Makhdum Jahaniyan-i-Jahangasht. He recognised the rulers as the chosen creatures of God; therefore, any rebellion or disobedience against them was an unpardonable sin. He quoted the Holy Prophet (PBUH) that he who obeys the Sultan, obeys him and would be blessed bv God.

The Makhdum emphasised obedience to the Sultan to the extent that if any person was obedient to God and the Prophet (PBUH) but not to the sultan, such a person would be damned in the next life. He vehemently preached to his followers that it was the advice and policy of the Sufis of Makkah and Khurasan that no attempt should be made to topple the government of the ruler.

The result of the policy of collaboration and loyalty was that the sufis' relations with the rulers always remained friendly and never a conflict occurred between these two institutions. However, it was the general policy of the rulers to crush any rebellion against them. Rebels were not spared. Therefore, such a noble and kind-hearted sultan as Jalaluddin Khilji (d.1296), who even pardoned thieves and bandits, ordered the killing of a sufi, Sayyidi Maula, on the suspicions of involvement in a conspiracy against him.

It is said that Sultan Alauddin (d.1316), to know the political designs of Nizamuddin Auliya, once sent him a request to instruct him on some political issues. Nizamuddin sent back his reply with these words: There was a great difference between a king and a dervish, and he was a dervish who spent his time aloof from worldly affairs in a corner. This replv satisfied Alauddin and he refrained from taking any action against him.

Once, the sufi saints proved themselves non-political, they were directly or indirectly patronised by the rulers. They built khanqahs (monastery) and shrines for them, granted them stipends, landed properties, and gifts. This made the sufis rich and prosperous.

The monastery soon became the centre of their disciples where they could live and get their food from a large kitchen. They were also recipients of the gifts which the "pir" distributed among them as soon as he got them from the king or the nobles. The gatherings of the disciples in the khanqah helped the saint to raise his status in the public because he became the medium through which the stories of the Shaikh's piety and generosity were circulated and earned him respect and honour.

The Spiritual Kingdom of the Sufi-Saints

To achieve political domination through wars and intrigues was bloody and tortuous. Therefore, the sufi saints, fully using their popularity, established their spiritual kingdoms, not opposing the political authority of the rulers, but on the other hand, helping the political forces in times of crises. The significance of this spiritual kingdom was that the different sufi orders maintained such kingdoms peacefully without entangling with each other.

The concept of the duality of the spiritual and the temporal is found in the teachings of the sufi saints. Shaikh Muhiyiddin al-Arabi (d.1239) outlined a parallel authority of the Poles (Qutbs), Abdals (certain persons by whom God continues the world in existence); and Autads (certain saints regarded as props of the faith).

The disciples of Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi (d.1624) recognised him as a Qayyum (permanent pole) and believed that the whole universe was controlled by him and nothing could happen without his will. Shah Waliullah (d.1762) divided the caliphate into two categories: exterior and esoteric. The duties of the exterior caliphate were to defend the boundaries, collect revenue and taxes, distribute money among the needy, dispense justice, build mosques, inns, roads, and bridges, and be ready for holy war (jihad).

The function of the esoteric caliphate was to impart the education of the Shariat; to persuade people to adopt the religious way of life; and to convince them about the truth of religion.

The head of the spiritual kingdom was known as the Shaikh or Murshid (guide). He held absolute authority over his disciples (subjects) and was regarded as supreme. It was the duty of the disciples to obey their murshid blindly. Any deviation from obedience was tantamout to rebellion.

It is said that one day sombody asked Nizamuddin Auliya: suppose there were two disciples: one who performed his religious duties regularly and at the same time was devoted to his pir; but the second disciple only observed religious tenets without having any devotion to his pir. In this case, "who is superior?" The reply of the Shaikh was simple: "The one who loved his pir."

As the Shaikh was the undisputed authority and enjoyed respect and honour of his disciples, he regarded himself superior to the worldly ruler. Soon it was believed by the people that the political authority was subordinate to the spiritual power of the Shaikh; and in reality, the whole business of the state was run on their orders. No worldly ruler could be successful without the blessing of the sufi saint. Ahmad Sirhindi in his book "Risala Tahlilya" writes, "The sufis get their authority directly from God and the Prophet (PBUH). It is they who sustained the universe; and it is they who gave rain and food to people."

During the Sultanate period, it was believed by people that every Sultan got political power because of the blessing of some sufi. For example, Iltutmish (d.1236), Balban (d.1287), Muhammad Tughluq (d.1351), and Hassan Gango Bahmani (d.1358) were blessed by Khawaja Moinuddin Chishti, Fariduddin Shakarganj, and Nizamuddin Auliya, successively. Although, the historicity of these stories is doubtful, the disciples and the followers of the sufi saints popularised them to such an extent that it became a general belief that no Sultan could get political authority without the consent of the pir.

Similarly, the successes of the Sultan, the prosperity of ths subjects, and maintenance of peace were attributed to the sufi saints. According to contemporary sources, the victories of Mahmud of Ghazna (d.1030) Muizuddin Ghori (d.1206), Alauddin Khilji, were the result of the prayers of Khawaja Abu Muhammad Chishti, Moinuddin Chishti, and Nizamuddin Auliya successively, while the credit of the Mughal conquests went to Ghauth Gowaliyari.

The roots of the spiritual kingdom were so deep that even the rulers sought help from the sufi saints in times of crises. It is a historical fact that Iltutmish once asked the sufis of his kingdom to help him in eradicating the famine which affected the city of Delhi. He pointed out that the duty of the king was to protect people from oppressers, while it was the duty of the sufis to pray and seek the blessings of God.

Historians report incidents, where in the case of the rulers' misbehaviour towards the sufis, they were immediately punished. For example, Qutbuddin Khilji was assassinated because his treatment of Nizamuddin

Auliya was hostile. It is also said that when Ghiyathuddin Tughluq ordered Nizamuddin to leave Delhi before his arrival he said that still Delhi was far away. The Sultan couldn't enter Delhi and died as a result of the collapse of the newly built palace. Such incidents simply frightened the rulers and therefore, they sought the sufis' favour.

Sufi Saints and their Darbars

There were some structural differences between temporal and spiritual kingdoms There could be only one supreme command and authority in a temporal dominion and if there were many claimants, the sword decided the fate in favour of one. On the contrary, in a spiritual kingdom, there could be more than one Shaikh from different mystical orders ruling over his disciples separately.

These Shaikhs divided their kingdoms into different Viliayats (provinces or districts) and appointed their assistants (Khulafa). There were no civil wars among the Sufi Shaikhs on the issue of territory. They tolerated each other. There is a story that when Abu Ali Qalandar (d.1324) came to Panipat, another Sufi, Shamsuddin, sent him a bowl of milk. The Qalandar put some flower petals in it and sent it back. On seeing this, Shamsuddin explained that he had conveyed to the Qalandar that this territory belonged to him and there was no place for him to stay, and the Qalandar had replied that he would accommodate him like flower petals on the surface of milk.

Therefore, there were a number of Khulafa belonging to different orders in one province, but they never interfered in each other's affairs. However, the

Khalifa of the same order refrained from intervening in his colleague's province. This is evident from a story that when Firoz Shah (d.1388), travelling from Thatta, reached Sarsuti, Shaikh Nasiruddin Chiragh Dehlavi (d.1356) told him that up to "this place" was his responsibility to protect him. From "here on" was the territory of Qutbuddin Munawwar; thereupon, the Sultan must ask his permission to cross it safe and sound.

To strengthen the spiritual kingdom, there were different rituals to cement the relations of the Shaikh and his disciples. One was the ceremony of "Bayya" or "Bait" (oath of allegiance). After taking oath, the disciple surrendered his self to the Shaikh and followed him without any question. It was also incumbent upon a disciple to observe all the traditions of his order and never violate them.

The rituals of the "bayya" were different from order to order. For example, in the Chishti order, the hair of a disciple was cut above his ear and he was asked to wear the cap of the silsila (chain).

There were two motives of the "Bayya": to establish the authority of the Sheikh; and to foster the spirit of brotherhood among the disciples.

The Shaikh or Murshid, in his monastery, followed the ceremonies and etiquettes of the court. He, like the king, sat in a prominent place. His disciples paid homage to the Shaikh by kissing his hand, foot, or dress; in some cases, they prostrated themselves before him. Nizamuddin Auliya allowed his disciples two prostrate themselves before him.

In his presence, the disciples fully observed all rules and regulations which were practised in the court by the king. They sat quiet and did not move on any side. Neither did they talk with each other nor laughed or coughed. They took care not to turn their backs to the Shaikh. The disciples of Nizamuddin related that in his presence, they could not even dare to look at his face.

The Shaikh usually did not rise from his seat. Only in case of some colleagues and important persons did he welcome and embrace them. It was obligatory for every disciple to make a gift (Nazr) to the Shaikh to express his loyalty and obedience.

There were also a number of similarities between a Shaikh and a ruler. As there were historians at the court to write the accounts of the reign of the ruler, the disciples kept the sayings of his Shaikh known as Mofuzat (annals: uttered words). Their monastery was like the palace of the king where disciples gathered to get their blessings. They achieved glory after their death, when their shrines attracted people to visit and fulfil their wishes through their mediation. Their annual "urs" saved their memory for ever. They ruled even after their death.

The "Spiritual Kingdom" and the "Khilafat"

It was the general practice that the Shaikh appointed his successor in his lifetime. There was no law or tradition in seclecting the successor. Usually a disciple famous for his devotion to the Shaikh was selected. Bahauddin Zakariya (d.1266), from the order of the Suhrawardiya, was the first who nominated his own son as his sucesssor and thus set an example of keeping the Shaikhdom in the family. Later on, it was adopted by some other orders.

The Shaikh, in order to legitimize succession, awarded his successor a robe, a cap, shoes, a shirt, and "asa" (staff). On nominating Qutbuddin Bakhtiyar Kaki (d.1235) as the Khalifa (assistant) and successor, Moinuddin Chishti put a cap on his head, gave him his dress, and handed over to him his Murshid's Quran and "Mussala" (rug for prayer).

Similarly, Nizamuddin Auliya gave his robe, staff, beads, and a bowl made of wood to his successor Nasiruddin Chiragh Dehlawi. These gifts he got from his Murshid Fariduddin Shakarganj when he was appointed his successor. Thus, the ceremony of "Sajjada Nashini" (i.e. successorship) could be related to the ceremony of crowning. Only after this ceremony was he recognized as the Shaikh and his position was legitimized after getting gifts from his Murshid.

The Shaikh usually divided his spiritual kingdom into different parts and, to look after the affairs, sent one of his close disciples, after bestowing on him his robe, as his Khalifa. There were three methods to appoint a Khalifa: the Shaikh got the message that it was the divine will to appoint a person as a Khalifa; the Shaikh chose his devotee on the basis of his piety; or nominated him on some recommendation.

The nominated person was awarded a certificate known as the "Khilafatnama" and was authorized to appoint his own assistants.

If a Khalifa violated any of the traditions of the order, the certificate could be cancelled as a punishment, thus abrogating his authority. The "sanad" or the certificate was awarded in the gathering of disciples. After this honour, he was congratulated by his fellows and he thereafter proceeded to his province to take charge of spiritual affairs. So, through this ceremony, it became known to the public that he was the Khalifa of their area and therefore they turned to him for their problems and grievances.

The Shaikh, at the time of the bestowal of the Khilafat, awarded titles to his assistant. Usually, these titles, like the rulers, ended on "Din" such as Moinuddin, Jalaluddin, and Nizamuddin. Besides this, the Shaikh was referred to by his disciples and followers with dignified titles such as Sultan al-Auliya (King of saints), Mahbub-i-Subhani (beloved of God), Ghauth al-Azam (great helper), Shaikh Muhiyuddin Abdu Qadir Jilani; Shaikh al-Shuyukh (leader of leaders) Shihab al-Millat (meteor of the nation) Shaikh Shihabuddin

Suhrawardi; and Sultan al-Tairkin (ruler of ascetics) Shaikh Hamiduddin Sufi.

Though there were similarities between temporal and spiritual kingdoms, the end of both kingdoms was different. The temporal Kingdom and its ruler lost political power with the passage of time as people became politically conscious, but the spiritual kingdom exists even today and the Shaikh, dead or alive, rules over the minds of the people unchallenged.

Sufis and the Preaching of Islam in India

It is generally assumed that in India sufi saints are rsponsible for preaching and converting people to Islam. This claim is based on the evidence of the biographical literature written by the disciples of sufi saints and, in order to glorify their role, attributed the achievement of conversion to them without realizing the fact that this would tarnish their reputation for tolerance of other religions and violate the basic concept of the sufis known as the Tariqat (road to sufi perfection) which opposed the rigidity of the Shariat (path).

The role of the Sufis in history is quite different from missionaries who are often zealots, and believe in only one truth and salvation of the whole of humanity through their truth. This is antithetical to mystic philosophy which recognizes varieties of truth and accommodates people in its fold irrespective of religion and creed.

The role of sufi saints in preaching Islam in India is promoted by religious circles in an attempt to discredit the Muslim rulers. This interpretation originated during the colonial period when the Muslims, after losing political power, found themselves a minority bereft of any authority and, therefore, insecure and unprotected.

This developed into anger against the Muslim rulers of India who followed a secular policy and tolerated Hindu the religion and allowed them to perform their rituals freely. It was believed that if the Muslim rulers had patronised the missionaries to propagate Islam and used state machinery to lure people into becoming Muslims, the situation might have been different. Therefore, these circles accused the Muslim rulers of negligence. Those rulers who openly violated religious tenets and upheld secular values were severely condemned.

For example, in the early period of the Aligarh University (1889) the topic of a debate was: "The fall of the Mughal Empire was due to Akbar rather than to Aurangzeb". The majority condemned Akbar for following the policy of integration and absorbing the Hindus in the Mughal administration. This debate and its arguments clearly indicate the psyche of the Indian Muslims who were feeling uneasy with the political developments of India.

Interestingly, on the other hand, the nationalist historians glorified the role of the Muslim rulers who, following the policy of tolerance, treated all the people on an equal footing. In all such studies, such as Ishwari Parasad's "Humayon"; Beni Parasad's "Jahangir"; and Saxena's "Shahjahan", there was a concept of the Indian nation which was based not on religion but on geographical boundaries. The Muslim rulers, especially the Mughals, united the Indian people by establishing an empire and gave them a sense of nationhood.

Above all, Akbar was praised and became a symbol of Hindu-Muslim unity. Consequently, the more he was admired by the nationalists and secularists, the more he was condemned by the Muslim religious circles.

Therefore, to counter the role of the Muslim rulers, the history of sufi saints was developed on parallel lines. Ironically, in these efforts, they were supported by some leftist historians who, condemning the authoritarian and despotic rule of the Muslim kings, eulogized sufi saints and projected them as people's representatives. Prof. Habib, and Khaliq Ahmad Nizami, in spite of their different views, compromised on this issue.

Though there is enough literature on the lives of individual sufis and mystical movements in India, most of the literature lacks historical veracity and is written on the basis of love and devotion. To sift the truth from this material, we need the use of a scientific method in writing our history; and for this, we have to wait for a long period.

Conversion to Islam in India

In India, conversion did not take place solely due to the efforts of the sufi, but political, social, cultural, and economic factors also played an important role in spreading Islam. In India, Islam was introduced first in South India by Arab traders who had good commercial and social relations with the rulers as well as with the people. On their arrival, they found that the Hindu society was divided into a number of castes and sub-castes which determined an individual's place in society.

There was no social mobility and nobody was allowed to challenge the deep-rooted customs and traditions.

Depicting the rigidity of the caste system, Shaikh Zainuddin Ma'bori wrote in his book "Tuhafat al-mujahidin" that the people of Malabar strictly observed the rules of the caste system and never dared to violate them. If a low-caste person touched the upper-caste man, the latter had to take a bath to purify himself and then eat his food, otherwise, he would lose his caste."

The upper-caste people were not allowed to eat any food which was cooked by the lower castes. There were a number of prohibitions for the higher caste persons not to make any contact with the low castes. The result of such rigidity was that many people, after losing their castes, converted to Islam in order to escape humiliation.

A modern historian Mahmud Bengalori, quoting the "Kitab-i-Malibar", wrote that if a Nair committed some violation against the rules of the caste system, he had to leave the city and disappear in some far-off place. After the arrival of Muslims, some of them accepted Islam.

Besides this, in South India, the Muslims had their separate settlements which provided protection to the new converts. The population of Muslims further increased when they married local women, purchased slave girls gave birth to more children. Thus, Muslim traders contributed more than sufi saints to convert the people of South India.

In the next stage, the Arab conquerors brought Islam to Sindh. The majority of those who came along with Muhammad-bin-Qasim were soldiers. As a result of the conquest, the first converts were the tribal leaders and chiefs who not only collaborated with the Arabs but became Muslims in order to resume their status and privileges. They were followed by their tribes. The rest of the conversions took place after the establishment of the Arab government in Sindh.

In North India also, the Muslims came as conquerors, but in spite of their political power, they failed to convert the majority of the people to Islam. The roots of Brahmanism were so deep that conversion could not appeal to Hindu people and they, throughout this period, retained their religious faith.

After analysing the process of conversion in India, we find the following reasons:

1. After establising Muslim power, there were groups of opportunists who collaborated with the Muslim government and, to express their loyalty, became Muslims. In return they were awarded high posts and jagirs.
2. The landlords were afraid of the confiscation of their lands; therefore, to save their properties, they converted to Islam.
3. Some of the people, in order to protect themselves from the plunder of the conquering armies, became Muslims.
4. Lower castes accepted Islam in the hope of raising their social status.
5. Those who were expelled from their biradaris, took refuge in Islam.
6. Some people became Muslims as a result of Islamic teachings after having close social and cultural relations with Muslims.

It is wrong to assume that the Muslim ruler didn't take any interest in the preaching of Islam. Some rulers made conscious efforts to persuade the people to embrace Islam. It was the practice that the Hindu women who were married to the Muslim rulers were first converted. Prisoners of war, in order to save their lives, generally became Muslims. Slaves also adopted the religion of their masters. Two famous slaves of the sultanate period, Malik Kafur and Malik Khusru, were Hindu. There are a number of examples when the chiefs, Samidars, and landlords accepted Islam just to save their properties.

There are a number or tribes and communities which claimed that they were converted by some famous sufi saint. Such stories have no historical evidence and are concocted to conceal the real nature of their conversion. For example, the Khanzadas of Alwar traced their conversion to the period of Firuz Tughluq (D. 1388) when their ancestor Nadir Bahadur was made a Muslim by Qutbuddin Bakhtiyar Kaki (D.1235). There are two hundred between these two persons.

Moreover, the Sufi saints spent most of their time in the Khanqah (monastery) separated from worldly affairs. Therefore, there is no evidence that they preached Islam systematically with zeal. It is however, assumed that some people, after attending their sermons and after being moved by their piety, might have converted to Islam; but to give the sole credit to the sufi is not correct.

Role of the Sufis in the Indian Sub-continent

What Romila Thapar writes about the renouncers in ancient India in her article "Renunciation: the making of counter culture?" is more or less applicable to the sufi saints of the Islamic world: they "were neither negating the society to which they belonged nor trying to radically alter it; but rather they were seeking to establish a parallel society." The very renunciation delegated immense power to the sufis because it was believed that by doing this they had acquired spiritual power and authority which enabled them to solve mundane problems. That was the reason people thronged to the Khankah or dargah, that is, alleviating their grievances and fulfilling their wishes. For example, when the devotees visit the dargah of Salar Masud Ghazi, they recite the following verses:

To the city of the Ghazi have we set out.
To adorn our lives, to awaken our sleeping fate;
to tell him the tale of our woes, to procure
Forgiveness for all our sins.
Have we set out to the city of the Ghazi.

Instead of cutting their relation with society and retiring to forests and mountains, the sufis resided in towns, where their khanqahs were built by rulers and nobles in order to earn their favour. They offered them cash and gifts for the maintenance of their establishment. Thus Khanqahs became a parallel centre involved in civil wars, intrigues, change of dynasties, and political upheavals, which consequently reduced their power, created instability of the state and insecurity of the society. Under these circumstances, the Khanqah became a centre which provided people spiritual solace as well as a sense of protection.

With the emergence of the provincial Muslim dynasties in the 14th and 15th centuries, the sufi order further spread throughout the subcontinent. In case of grants of lands or finding no patronage in the cities, some of them settled in the rural areas where they influenced the peasantry and converted them into their disciples.

However, during Mughal rule the role of sufis had changed considerably because the Mughals founded an empire by conquering most of the Indian subcontient which made them powerful and absolute. They had immense resources at their disposal and did not require the spiritual power of sufis for their success. Therefore, the Sufis did not contribute to Mughal victories as they did in the case of the Sultans of Delhi. The Mughal rulers paid homage to the sufis only to fulfil wishes such as the birth of a male child or a cure from some disease. The result was that lack of the ruler's patronage compelled them to settle in small provincial towns where they attracted provincial bureaucrats, elite, and the common people to their khanqas.

Again, political disintegration and choas in the later Mughal period gave prominence to the sufis and their dargahs. In the absence of effective political power, people resorted to the sufis as alternative authority to protect them from calamities.

The emergence of British political power weakened the sufis in the urban centres while they built their power bases in rural areas. Therefore, keeping in view their rural influence, the British government required their help as mediators. They agreed to play this role in order to keep their status and privileges.

After independence, the sufis, mashaikhs, and sajjada nashins continued to play the role of mediators between the people and government. So far they have succeeded in retaining their status and position during dictatorships by legitimising the rule of the dictator and, in case of democracy, either contesting elections or supporting their loyal candidates.

However, change in political and social structure and new scientific and technological inventions are threatening their traditional status. For example, originally they emerged as dissenters against the rigidity of the ulema. In the new political system, the role of opposition and dissent is taken up by political parties and pressure groups. Their role of mediators is also minimised as a result of rapid communication, centralisation and the media. Their influence as healers is undermined with new scientific inventions, especially in medicine, which has already eradicated most of the dreadful diseases. Moreover, social awareness and health facilities have induced people to go to doctors rather than to their pirs.

Keeping in view these changes, the question arises: can sufi saints play an effective and healthy role in our society or, as a class have they outlived and become a thing of the past?

Sufi Cults : an Invention of Tradition

Traditions are invented from time to time by individuals, groups, parties and states, to further their interest or to fulfil a community's cause. These traditions relate to personality cults, festivals, ceremonies, and rituals. They are promoted in such a way that soon their origin is forgotten and their distortion is accepted as pure and genuine. Once the roots of a tradition become strong, it helps different groups and their interest to receive the legitimacy of a tradition. Usually history is scoured for help. The older it is the more its legitmacy is accepted.

Superstitions are the weakest point in the people and one which is easily exploited. Therefore, traditions invented on the basis of belief, faith, and superstitions are widely and popularly accepted without challenge. For example, in the case of some unknown pir (mystic, saint), it immediately attracts the attention of people who start visiting for the blessngs of the saint. From the discovery, the process of making a tradition begins. Some rich devotee, out of reverence, constructs the tomb, which consequently provides a safe place for the mutawalli (caretaker) and the disciples.

The next stage to popularise the pir is to celebrate his annual urs (Arabic:wedding). On this occasion a number of groups gain financial benefits. For example, different parties of qawwals make it a custom to come and earn money offered by the audience. Then, on that occasion, a bazar is set up where flowers, sweets, chaddars, perfumes, and eatables are sold. It becomes the interest of all stallholders and shopkeepers to attract more people by popularising the saint by narrating his miraculous powers and stories of fulfilment of people's wishes. As people visit the tomb daily, the business of these shopkeepers thrives and soon a permanent bazar is added to the complex of the tomb.

Publishers and booksellers take advantage and publish books containing the saint's miracles. Thus, the book industry greatly helps to spread the tradition. Once the tradition is established, it is difficult to dismantle it. It becomes belief and scholarly arguments against it cannot shake it.

To strengthen the tradition of a dargah (i.e. court) and the miraculous power of the sufi, holy relics are displayed which usually include his hair, dress, shoes, and staff. Zyarat, (pilgrimage) of the relics is propitious. They continuously attract people to visit the tomb and present offerings according to their status.

There are a large number of dargahs throughout the Indian subcontinent and some of them attract huge crowds on the occasion of the "urs". The process through which these dargahs have become centres of pilgrimage is interesting. In the first place, it becomes popular among the disciples of the saint, then slowly stories of the saint's miacles are spread by his successors and disciples which bring people and neighbouring localities to visit it. On hearing these stories, nobles and rulers visit the tomb and construct huge mausoleums and other buildings attached to the dargah. Royal patronage makes the dargah famous and its popularity spreads countrywide.

The process is fully evident in the case of Moinuddin Chishti whose grave, after his death in 1236, became deserted and soon became a sanctuary of wild beasts. The tomb was built by a mystic Shaikh Hussain Nagori with the money that he got from the ruler of Malwa, Sultan Ghiyasuddin Khiljioh'c (1469-1500). But he became popular in India only when Akbar visited his tomb and his successors built a number of buildings. Following the Mughal dynasty, nobles and people began to visit the tomb. Slowly different ceremonies and rituals were formulated to add reverence to the saint. Though he became famous through the patronage of royalty, he is affectionately called Gharib Nawaz or the patron of the poor.

More or less, nearly all the prominent dargahs became famous through this process. However, some of the dargahs of the famous saints remain obscure because they failed to find a royal patron. For example, Shah Inayat of Johk remained less glamorous than Shah Latif. The latter found patronage from the nationalist groups and the state, who have popularised him throughout the country. Strangely, Shah Inayat who fought against rulers for a just cause, could not become a symbol for the nationalists. They chose Shah Latif who was a poet and mystic but not politically radical. This indicates that the nationalists of Sindh wanted compromise rather than confrontation.

Thus, the study of invented traditions leads us to understand the mind, motives, and designs of these individuals and parties who support and strengthen them to further their own interests.

غریب نواز

THE INTELLECTUALS

The State and the Intellectual

The intelligentsia came into existence with the developmental process of knowledge and became its custodians; in this capacity they even held political power and assumed the role of the priest-king. Later on, as a result of the new formation of political structure, royal dynasties usurped political power and the status of the intelligentsia was relegated to a secondary position. However, the Brahmans, Shamans, and other priestly classes, who monopolised knowledge, were incorporated in the state structure as an important ally of the political leadership.

The strength of the priestly and knowledge-holder class was in their spiritual as well as worldly knowledge. It was the power of knowledge which made them respectable and fearsome. As holders of religious knowledge, they coronated the king, performed all rituals from birth to death, cured the sick, blessed the accused, and organised all festivals and ceremonies.

To challenge their authority, a new class of intellectuals emerged which was composed of poets, thinkers, and scientists. They ridiculed superstitious beliefs, and criticised blind following. They based their whole philosophy on rationalism: to doubt and investigate were two basic principles of their approach.

There ensued a conflict between the priestly-cum-ruling class and the intellectuals. On one side there were attempts to enslave the people while on the other side efforts were made to liberate them from all kinds of bondage. With the civilising process, this conflict continued in every society on a minor or major scale. In Greek society, there were Diogenes, Epicurus and Socrates who struggled to free the human mind from irrationality. In India, the Charvak philosophers shattered the old and rotten beliefs by propagating their materialistic philosophy.

In Islamic society, the Mutazalla philosophers and the anonymous writers of the Ikhwanal-Safa, under the influence of Greek philosophy, challenged narrow-mindedness and pleaded for rationality. As challengers to the status quo they venerated old traditions. These intellectuals suffered and were humiliated by the ruling classes. They were tortured and executed; but fortified by their knowledge, they continued to preach new ideas and kept the civilising process moving.

However, the ruling classes, to silence them, incorporated them in the state system. Soon the sultans and emperors earned the titles of the "patron of art and literature" and decorated their court by collecting all leading intellectuals. It became such an obsession that in the Muslim world, from the 11th century onwards every ruler tried to keep, by hook or crook, the famous intellectuals at his court.

Mahmud of Ghazna, although more interested in war and conquests, forced his subordinate rulers to send the reputed scholars to his court.

Alberuni was one of them. Ibn Sina refused and escaped far away, to be caught later by the sultan.

As state employees, the role of the intellectuals was reduced to dancing to the tune of their patrons. The poets composed odes in praise of the rulers; the historians narrated their conquests and victories; the philosophers justified their oppressive policies; and the scientists helped the rulers in their war efforts. Those who remained beyond the pale of court patronage were either silenced or their views were successfully curbed.

Throughout the rule of the Muslim dynasties in India, intellectuals played the role of the subordinate assistants of the state. Except for a few poets, far from the state centre, who recorded their voice against state oppression, no intellectual movement emerged to challenge the outdated values and customs. The intellectuals preferred to compromise rather than to resist and suffer.

Without intellectual activities, Muslim society of the subcontinent became stagnant and barren. Its mental development ceased and it failed to comprehend the process of change.

Intellectuals of 18th Century India

During the Mughal period, as a result of state disintegration, the financial resources of the king were considerably reduced and it became difficult for him to maintain the glamour of the court and to patronize the intellectuals. The flow of the Iranian men of letters also ceased as soon as they found out about the bankruptcy of the Mughals and their inability to support them financially.

However, a positive effect of the decentralisation of the empire and political and financial weakness of the king was that those intellectuals who were attached to the court for their sustenance, liberated themselves from the tutelage of the rulers and the nobility and became free to express their views.

The poets were no longer bound to praise their patrons; the historians to glorify their rule; the thinkers to legitmise their policies; and the scientists to serve their interests. This freedom followed the creation of a lively and forceful literature in the Indian subcontinent during the 18th century.

Disillusioned and disappointed, and intellectuals criticised the rulers and their policies. They ridiculed the nobility for corruption, inefficiency, and lethargy. They heaped satire on the hypocrisy of the ulema; and expressed their dissatisfaction over the administrative machinery. Poets, through a genre of poetry known as the "Shahr Ashub", boldly pointed out the decadence of society. The writings of historians are particularly illuminating about the character of the ruling classes and their involvement in intrigues against each other.

However, there was one problem: these intellectuals could not survive independently. There was no source of income except to seek patronage either of the nobility or some "nawab" or Raja. As the political situation was not stable, they had to move from one place to another in search of a new job and a new patron.

This provided them with an excellent opportunity to travel and observe different parts and to meet different people which consequently helped them to expand their vision.

As they had to change their services frequently, they were not bound to write according to the pleasure of only one patron. In the case of their disappointment, they even criticised their fomer patrons. The genre of Hijv (insult) became a favourite to take revenge and humiliate the opponent.

Thus, the literature of the 18th century is very rich and reflects Indian society in all its different aspects. There are elegies, satire, ghazals and poems encompassing the whole society. But there was one defect: those intellectuals failed to provide any alternative; they mourned the decadence, but how to get out of the morass remained unanswered. They also failed to grasp the internal and external process of change and therefore how to accommodate to the changing patterns of time.

The weaknesses of these intellectuals were that they were conscious of past glory and hence adopted a retrogressive outlook. They pointed out the weaknesses but could not suggest the cure. Shah Walliullah, who is regarded as a great intellectual, suggested a reform of the system but not to change it in view of the presence of the European nations and their activities.

In short, the writings of the 18th century intellectuals provided some remorse, some pleasure and some entertainment but no consciousness to respond to the challenges effectively.

The reason for this weakness was their past traditions which kept them at the court in the service of the ruling classes. This made them subordinate to these classes. They always sought guidance from above and had no courage to decide on their own. That's why they could not guide the society at the most crucial juncture of historical change.

Sayyid Ahmad Khan and His Contemporaries

The generation of Muslim intellectuals which emerged after 1857 was politically more conscious than their predecessors. They undertook the task of guiding the helpless and hopeless community towards a certain direction.

Sayyid Ahmad Khan, who experienced the humiliation of 1857, fully realised the weaknesses of the Muslim community and proposed a plan to reform the society to get rid of deep-rooted evils, superstitions, obsolete traditions and rotten institutions.

Realising that the Muslim community had no power to resist the colonial power, he persuaded them to collaborate; and in order to modernize, learn new ideas from the west.

His revolutionary step was to simplify the Urdu language and make it capable of assimilating modern knowledge. This step was significant because Urdu was burdened by its complex usage, proverbs, similes, and Persianised words. He borrowed the terms and expressions from the English language and used them in his writings to popularize them. His attempt to change the character of Urdu from a literary and poetic to a simple and scientific language was, somehow, successful.

He also encouraged the Muslims to adopt the western civilization and technology in an attempt to respond to the challenges of modern times. But he, at the same time emphasized their own identity which is evident from his publication of the source material on the Indian history related to the Muslim Rule.

Sayyid Ahmad Khan inspired his contemporaries who also created an awareness in the community. One could criticise their approach, but it is an undeniable fact that through their writings an intellectual atmosphere was created which witnessed a conflict between modernists and conservatives.

The modernists, on the one side, defended their religious identity by refuting the criticism of the European scholars, but on the other side, adopted the European research methods and techniques to re-evolve their own history, culture and religion. Maulvi Chiraqh Ali did the pioneering research on Islam and Islamic history with a non-traditional interpretation. It is unfortunate that he couldn't earn larger popularity because of his unorthodox views.

The conservative intellectuals who defended the cultural values and traditions against the on-slaught of western civilization did not argue on rational grounds but appealed to the emotions and sentiments of the people. Akbar Allahabadi, the poet, became their spokesman and handled all satires and jokes, thus reducing their importance.

Therefore, the conflict between modernists and conservatives is between rationality and emotions. This conflict which is fully reflected in our literature differs in its use of the language. The modernists, by using modern methods, argue their case on evidence; while the conservatives, bereft of any arguments, prove their stance merely by using flowery language.

Unfortunately, the debate which was initiated by Sayyid Ahmad Khan and his colleagues could not reach its logical conclusion. As a result of political developments in which the British colonialists and Hindus both emerged as hostile to the Muslim community, the approach of the coming generation of Muslim intellectuals, European educated as well traditionalist religious scholars, changed, and they joined hands together and emphasized religious identity at the expense of modernity. It was the denial of Sayyid Ahmad Khan and his colleagues' approach which appealed to the community to modernise not only their language, culture, habits, but also their religion.

Successive generations of intellectuals adopted Pan-Islamist views and supported the Khilafat and Hijrat movements, but later on, due to internal and external political changes, they got divided along nationalist and communalist lines. Those who were in favour of the Two-Nation Theory, helped the Muslim League by writing poems, pamphlets, and articles in justification of Muslim demands. After partition, the intellectuals of Pakistan inherited these traditions and carried them further.

Intellectuals and Ideology

As Pakistan came into being on the basis of the two-nation theory, the intellectuals were sought by the political leadership to justify the creation of the new country. First and foremost was the task of the historians to accentuate the historical development of the two-nation theory. Some of them trace it back to the arrival of the Arabs in Sindh under Muhammad B. Qasim who laid the foundation of a separate nation in the Indian sub-continent.

The other historians point to contradictions between Hindus and Muslims throughout history and show how the two nations failed to integrate with each other. The topic of Muslim identity became an important aspect of our history and consequently divided history into two parts: on one side were those forces which opposed the Muslim identity and tried to eliminate it; on the other side were those which maintained and preserved this identity in spite of all upheavals.

This conflict is portrayed in the historical roles of Akbar and Sheikh Ahmad Sirhindi. Akbar, whose policies removed the differences between the Hindus and Muslims, was challenged by Ahmad Sirhindi who protected Muslim identity. Since then these two trends have continued in Indian history. The conclusion which is drawn by our historians is that those who opposed the concept of two-nations at any stage of the historical process were traitors to the Muslim community; and those who defended it were the heroes.

Thus our history is written in the rhythm of heroes and traitors. The history of freedom movement is especially full of such rhetoric. All individuals and movements which opposed the concept are excluded from our history. If at all mentioned, their role is either condemned, ridiculed or minimised.

The next category of intellectuals consists of poets, short-story writers and novelists who, in order to strengthen this ideology, wrote national songs and stories which could create a sense of patriotism. In essence, they exhorted people to sacrifice for the honour of the country. Moreover, they asked the young generation to follow in the footsteps of the national leaders.

However, there were some intellectuals who refused to follow the guidelines and critically examined the whole process of the creation of Pakistan and its political development. They raised their voice against the repressive policies of the successive governments, especially the military regimes of Ayub, Yahya, and Zia.

Though the number of such intellectuals was not large, it made the governing institutions uneasy. Soon attempts were made to curb their writings. The government adopted two methods to control such dissident intellectuals: their writings were declared unpatriotic and on this pretext their books were either heavily censored or banned; secondly, the government passed laws which rendered scholars and researchers unable to publish anything which was contrary to the official point of view.

The damaging effects of this policy are evident in our intellectual bankruptcy. It has become well nigh impossible to pursue independent conclusions. This has made our universities and research institutes dull and barren. There developed no tradition of academic debate, discourse and controversy.

Moreover, following the guidelines of the government, the intellectuals cut off all their links with the masses. This caused loss of prestige and credibility. As a result, they were no more respected in society. A few dissident intellectuals, disillusioned and disappointed, preferred self-exile to torture and imprisonment. The credit goes to those who in spite of all hardship, stayed and persistently continued to speak against the oppressive policies of the government. Such intellectuals kept the torch of freedom burning.

The Phenomenon of Official Intellectuals

In the short history of Pakistan, as a result of government patronage, an official class of intellectuals has emerged whose main task is to defend the official ideology and to support government policies. It is a privileged class in the sense that it has full access to the official media to propagate official views and to disparage opposition.

As a result of the frequent change of political systems in Pakistan, official intellectuals have no qualms in adopting the current official approach. For example, during Ziaul Haq's period, these intellectuals underwent a change, and poets started to write hamd (poem in praise of God) and naats [poems in praise of the Holy Prophet (PBUH)]; and artists concentrated on calligraphy; social scientists found the solution of all problems in Islamic democracy. Recognising their services, the government awarded them titles. Some of them were granted plots and cash.

Successive governments in Pakistan persistently endeavoured to control the intellectuals and to use them for their benefit. Ayub Khan organised the Writers' Guild to woo them on the side of the government. Similar policies were followed by other military dictators. Ziaul Haq brought leading itellectuals under the shadow of the Academy of Letters. He personally took interest in organising the Ahl-i-Qalam conferences and upgraded the writers by inviting them to the presidency. For this honour, some of the writers thanked him publicly.

On the other hand, those intellectuals who refused to collaborate with the government faced all sorts of hardships. First of all, they are no longer eligible to get any government job. Because of their opposition to government policies, or for having a liberal and secular outlook, their personal files are opened in different secret agencies where they are dubbed either enemies of the official ideology or agents of a foreign country. On the basis of this report they can neither get private service nor proceed abroad. In some cases they are hunted by police and face imprisonment and torture.

Having the reputation of government's opponents, even private publishers are hesitant to publish their books. In some cases book-sellers refuse to put their printed works on the shelves. Finding them no more useful, relatives and friends also cease to have any contact with them. A dissident intellectual has to pay a heavy price for his views.

Karl Popper, writing on Hegel in his famous book, the Open Society and its Enemies, points out that, as a result of state patronage, Hegel dominated the whole intellectual life of Prussia. The state did not give any opportunity to other intellectuals to present their views. Consequently, his contemporaries dwindled under his shadow. One of them was Schopenhauer whose philosophy was neglected and ignored. He was rediscovered forty years after his death when somebody found his book in a second-hand bookshop.

The same thing is happening in Pakistan. The state is promoting only those intellectuals whose views are in concurrence with the official ideology. As Iqbal's philosophy suits the ruling classes, his views are propagated and widely circulated, while those who challenge autocracy, obscurantism, fundamentalism, and favour a secular and democratic society, are not allowed to have access to the state media and the educational curriculum. Such intellectuals have to wait for a long time before being rediscovered and accepted by society.

However, there is some consolation to dissidents that official and sycophant intellectuals have a short life and with the change of time disappear in the dustbin of history. But the dissident will continue to live even after his natural death.

Intellectuals and their Patrons

In a feudal society, intellectuals cannot survive without the support of a patron. Similarly, in a dictatorial system they have to depend on institutions which are controlled by the state. Pakistani intellectuals face these problems: how to survive in a feudal society and how to adjust in a dictatorial and ideological milieu? The task is easy for those who compromise but for those who insist on a dissident voice, there are serious problems of survival without patronage.

First of all, it is not possible for any writer to adopt writing as a profession. He has to work somewhere for his livelihood and only in his spare time does he concentrate on his writing. Therefore, a majority of our intellectuals adopt this profession as a part-time one. The result is that they cannot get enough time to read and write. This affects their output. The time which should be spent on research, study, and producing results, is spent in some uninteresting work which can be done by any other person.

Those intellectuals who are in universities and research institutions have the opportunity to devote their whole time to research and work as professionals. But few take advantage of these facilities, while the majority find some excuse for not doing anything.

The reason behind the intellectual bankruptcy of our universities and research institutions lies in our ideology which prevents scholars from investigating anything which contradicts its contents. The subject of history Is one example of this attitude. As it is interpreted from the official point of view, it is expected of historians to follow the same and confirm it by their research. Therefore, only those topics which support the two-nation theory are accepted for research, and financial aid is also awarded to them. Scholars get promotions on such research and their books are selected for awards.

Moreover, the official media has created an image of our national leaders which suits the ruling classes, therefore, any research which challenges it, is either banned or censored. This happened to Wolpert's book on "Jinnah of Pakistan" which was banned in Pakistan because it portrayed the founder of Pakistan differently than the official image.

There is another example of a textbook on applied psychology which is written by Humair Hashmi and other scholars and published by the Urdu Science Board. By the time of its second edition, the former director opposed it on the ground that there was material in the book against the ideology and cultural traditions of our society.

Therefore, all these topics which uncover the weakness of society and examine the corrupt role of the ruling classes are not sanctioned for research.

In this state of affairs, intellectuals find themselves in the same situation as their predecessors were at the court: sycophancy. An intellectual is forced to dance to the tune of the ruling classes. He is allowed no independence.

As most of the members of the ruling classes belong to feudal families, their interest is to glorify their role in society. To fulfil this, they hire writers to write the history of their families and narrate the achievements of their forefathers. On the basis of the literature, they enhance their own image and acquire political power. The tragedy is that under financial strains, intellectuals are ready to sell their labour and contribute to distorting history and polluting the minds of the people. This shows that in our society knowledge has failed to subdue the power of wealth.

Intellectuals and State Awards

Generally awards and medals are instituted to recognise the services and contributions of intellectuals to art and culture. This system is corrupted in countries where dictatorship or ideological governments control society. In such a system awards are not bestowed on merit but on the basis of how much writers and intellectuals collaborate with the ruling institutions. In this case, intellectuals become a part of the establishment and fully support its policies.

In Pakistan, the government monopolises awards, and as there are few private awards for intellectuals, the government awards attract them and consequently they strive to get them at any cost. One wonders why our intellectuals are so fond of these awards. Their attitude clearly indicates their lack of commitment and their readiness to sell their creativity at a price. The don't have any grassroot contact with the people and are not satisfied with mere appreciation. They require material benefits and social status which can only be acquired by cooperating with the government.

This is the reason why our intellectuals make no discrimination between dictatorship and martial law. When they are told to write that Pakistan is an ideological state, they dutifully follow the instructions and write songs, stories, and academic works to support the government. They also hanker after awards to raise their social status as they are not confident that their work can earn for them a respectable place in society.

Therefore, throughout the period of Ayub Khan, Yahya Khan, and Ziaul Haq our intellectuals accepted awards without any qualms. They failed to protest against the repressive policies and violation of human rights. As a matter of fact, by accepting the awards and medals, these intellectuals not only endorsed the policies of the government but themselves became a part of it.

Here I remember Gustave Courbet, a French artist and a committed republican, who refused the ribbon of Legion of Honour and wrote a letter to Napoleon III protesting his selection for the award. "At the house of my friend Jules Dupre, at Isle Adam, I learned of decree naming me chevalier of the Legion of Honour. This decree, which my well-known opinions on artistic rewards and titles of nobility should have spared me, has been issued without my consent.

Such methods do you honour, Your Excellency, but allow me to say that they can change neither my attitude nor my decision.

My republican convictions make me unable to accept a distinction which belongs in essence to a monarchical order, my principles reject this decoration of the Legion of Honour, which, in my absence, you have accorded me.

At no time, under no circumstances, and for no reason would I have accepted it. Much less would I do so today. When betrayals multiply on every side, and the human conscience is saddened by so many selfish recantations. Honour does not lie in a title or a ribbon; it lies in actions and motives for actions. Respect for oneself and one's ideas is its largest portion. I honour myself by remaining faithful to my lifelong principles; if I betray them, I should desert honour to wear its mask?

My feelings as an artist are no less opposed to accepting a reward accorded me by the state. The state is incompetent in matters of art. When it undertakes a reward, it usurps the public taste.

Its intervention is altogether demoralising, disastrous to the artist, whom it deceives concerning his own merit; disastrous to art, which it encloses within official rules, and condemns to the most sterile mediocrity; it would be wisdom for it to abstain. The day the state leaves us free, it will have done its duty towards us.... Permit me then, Your excellency, to decline the honour you had thought to give me. I am fifty years old, and have always lived free, let me finish my life still free. When I am dead they will have to say of me: he never belonged to any school, to any church, to any institution, to any academy, above all to any regime, unless it were the regime of liberty."

However, though the majority of our intellectuals sold themselves and are ready to sell, there are some examples which encourage us to have hope in some intellectuals at least. Recently the government announced a posthumous award to the distinguished journalist, Mazhar Ali Khan, who was treated by all governments as an enemy of the state and an agent of a foreign country. His wife, Tahira Mazhar Ali, bluntly refused to accept the award. She rightly says, that people and not the government, are the sole judge to recognize her husband's services.

This is a correct step, because it is the policy of the government to include dissidents in the circle of officially patronized intellectuals and show their large heartedness to those who oppose them. Committed intellectuals must keep a distance and avoid being trapped by this outward show of official recognition.

Intellectuals and Financial Independence

In industrial and democratic countries the rate of literacy is high and people have the habit of reading. Demand for books , magazines, journals, and newspapers remains ever increasing. The competition to publish new and topical as well as academic books compels publishers to seek good writers in order to publish their books. As the fame of a writer grows the rate of his royalty increases. If a book becomes a bestseller, the writer earns a big amount and financially becomes independent to adopt the profession of writing as a full-time job. For example, Will Durant, who was a teacher of philosophy, earned so much money on his book. The Story of Philosophy that he left the job and devoted his whole life to writing The Story of Civilization, another monumental work in eleven volumes.

Similarly, writers get good payment when they contribute to newspapers and magazines. Moreover, there are a number of prestigious prizes for writers which not only improve their financial condition but help to spread their fame. Financially becoming independent, these intellectuals freely criticize the policies of government and uncover the weaknesses of society. In this capacity, they are highly respected by the people.

On the other hand, it is well-nigh impossible for Pakistani writers to earn their livelihood by adopting writing as their profession. First of all, the rate of literacy is very low and people have no reading habits. Those who want to read, cannot afford costly books. The result is that usually from 500 to 1000 copies of a book are published which are sold in several years. As most of the publishers are dishonest and illiterate, they, instead of paying royalty, make an attempt to get money from the writer.

In most cases, books of well-known writers are published no more than one thousand. Mostly without informing the author, they publish second and third editions, paying no royalty. The result is that the publishers accumulate wealth at the cost of the writers's misery.

The same policy is adopted by newspapers and magazines. The vernacular newspapers especially don't pay to their columnists. If somebody demands payment, their argument is that they are making him famous by publishing his column. Only two to three English newspapers pay their contributors; otherwise, efforts are made by other famous English dailies to avoid payment.

Therefore, for Pakistani intellectuals it is not possible to earn by contributing to newspapers and magazines. This makes the majority of intellectuals part-timers and as such they cannot play an effective role in society.

In Pakistani society, status is determined by financial means. Intellectuals fail to fulfil these requirements as they are not in a position to arrange feasts, entertain friends, and oblige people by helping them in their day-to-day affairs. This excludes them from the power structure and they fail to get any respect. People pity them but don't honour them.

Further, people don't respect them because they don't read them. Mostly they remain unnoticed in their own locality and city. Moreover, as the standard of education is low, most of the people fail to grasp new ideas. Therefore, an intellectual in Pakistan remains like a closed book and is looked down upon by the people as a lazy and useless person.

Again, Pakistani writers are divided into two groups: those who write in English and those who adopt Urdu and the regional languages as their medium. English writings are confined only to a limited-elite class or attract concerned people abroad. As a result, most of the writers who choose English, try to get their books published in Britian or the USA. Sometimes they write only for European readers. Keeping in view this state of affairs of Pakistani intellectuals, we ask a question: Can they play any role in bringing about a change in society?

Do We Have an Intellectual Tradition?

Among the intellectuals of Pakistan, the majority are poets, short-story writers and novelists. There are few historians, anthropologists, sociologists, scientists, philosophers and artists. The deep-rooted poetical traditions have greatly moulded our thinking. It has sustained a structure of language and expression which is complex, indirect, and flowery. In our poetic tradition language becomes more important than concepts; therefore composition of beautiful sentences without meaning is appreciated rather than simple sentences with a meaning. Such a tendency further strengthens emotion and undermines rationalism. Only a few attempts have been made to change the basic structure of our language (i.e. Urdu) and use it to write academic research work. However, these attempts cannot be successful unless we minimise the role of poets and produce scholars in the social and natural sciences.

Even the contribution of our poets and short-story writers to world literature is insignificant. As poets repeat the same old themes of our classical period and use the same similes and metaphors, they fail to add anything new. Sometimes in the the name of modernity, they imitate western poets and lose their own creativity.

The same approach is adopted by short-story writers and novelists.

As we have a weak intellectual tradition, foreign scholars and academicians work on different aspects of our society. Thus, we are accustomed to analysing and judging ourselves according to their point of view. As they have new technology and methodology, their work in more credible than ours. They write history for us, excavate our old ruins and help to reshape our past, tell us about sociological and psychological changes in our society, reinterpret our current and past history, suggest changes in our educational system. draw our attention to environmental problems, advise us on developmental issues, and help us design our future plans.

In all fields, we heavily rely on foreign experts. The result is that our intellectuals have become just followers and imitators having no confidence of their own. Our educational and research institutes have failed to train our people to analyse problems independently and find their solutions. We always seek the guidance of foreign experts, pay them heavily and obey them like cattle.

Nations that have no intellectual traditions, lose respect in the eyes of the world. A nation is respected on the basis of its contribution to world civilization. And what is our contribution in the fields of science and technology, medicine, philosophy, archaelogy, anthropology, and other social and natural sciences? Why should we expect to be respected on the basis of mediocrity?

Having no intellectual tradition, we have become a cultureless society, a society with no sophistication and refinement, a society, where imitation has become a fashion and creativity a rare species.

Therefore, in a society, where there is no appreciation of creative work, imitation becomes the only option and consequently, all our intellectuals imitate either past traditions and take refuge in the bygone days when their ancestors achieved prominence, or borrow from the West. The result is that they have failed to establish their own intellectual traditions and having no capability to respond to the challenges of modern times, they have allowed society to sink into decadence.

The Sell-out of Intellectuals

In a democratic and industrial society, the role of the intellectual changes. He is required to create an awarness among people to adjust to new patterns. To facilitate their research work, official and private foundations are established which provide them with generous funds. Moreover, universities and higher educational institutions allocate funds for research in the natural as well as social sciences. To publish their work, there are a number of highly academic journals which also initiate discussion, debates, and discourse on different topics. The result is that new and old concepts and interpretations are challenged, criticised, accepted and rejected by scholars.

This places intellectuals on a higher scale in society. They are appreciated and consulted as experts and specialists by governments on foreign, financial, and social matters.

One of the examples of the role of intellectuals in industrial-democratic society is their contribution to the students' rebellion in the 1960s which shook the whole of Europe and the USA. In another case, French intellectuals opposed the French war against Algeria and forced their government to recognise Algerian independence. These intellectuals were not misled by the emotionality of nationalism nor carried away by chauvinsim. Those who condemned them as anti-state and anti-nation soon disappeared in the dustbin of history. It is a well-known fact that when somebody suggested to De Gualle to arrest Sartre as the leading opponent of war, he refused and said how could he arrest Sartre because he was French.

Keeping in view these examples, when we ask the question: are Pakistan's intellectuals able to play such a role? The answer is no. Barring a few exceptions, the majority of Pakistani intellectuals collaborated with the ruling classes and helped them to rule over people. For example, in the case of war, instead of restraining the emotions of the people and highlighting the horrors of war, they glorified it by writing songs and stories and making the people more hysterical.

Why do our intellectuals play the role of opportunists, sycophants, and flatterers? Why don't they challenge authority, condemn it, criticise it, and revolt against it?

There are reasons: our intellectuals, by accepting the feudal culture, yearn for patronage and security. As authority provides them with security and patronage, they try to get its favour and use their intellectual creativity to strengthen it. As our society is illiterate and without resources, it cannot offer a higher bid in comparison to authority. Therefore, they ignore its problems and side with authority against the people. They are after medals, prizes and official honours.

This approach were clearly evident during the periods of martial law and dictatorship when intellectuals played an anti-people role and eulogised the dictators as saviours. Recently a book was published by

Altaf Gauhar "Ayub Khan: the First Military Dictator". The author, ignoring his domestic policies, concentrates on his role in foreign affaris in which he emerges as a statesman and a shrewd diplomat. The book is the best example of the distortion of facts. It is written with the purpose of absolving the writer and his mentor from sins which both of them together committed during our worst period of dictatorship.

There is another bureaucrat-intellectual, Akbar S. Ahmad, who, during Ziaul Haq's period wrote an article on "Arain Ethics" in which he, keeping in view that Ziaul Haq was an Arain, eulogised the community for its integrity and hard work. These examples can be multiplied as we have plenty of material in this field. As a result of this attitude, the role of our intellectual is limited. Cut off from the people, he has become a tool in the hands of the ruling classes. He has consequently lost his intellectual credibility in the eyes of the people.

Writer by all Means

There are ghost writers in every society. They write for others who aspire to become writers; sometimes for money, sometimes for benefits, and sometimes just to keep their anonymity. Once it was a tradition among Urdu poets, who had achieved the rank of ustad, to compose verses for their pupils who, in return appreciated and applauded them in mushairas and hooted down their rivals.

There are some very well-known writers and scholars in our society whose work is done by ghost-writers. These scholars either have enough financial resources to pay for the work or are heads or directors of academic institutions and, in this capacity, exploit scholars who work under them. Some write to please them, while some are coerced to hand over their research work to them. They participate in national and international conferences and read papers which are not written by them.

There was a well-known and financially sound intellectual who exploited scholars who had migrated from India and lived in poverty as their knowledge of Persian, Arabic, and history had no market value. They were employed to edit old manuscripts for a meagre amount. These manuscripts were published later on under the name of their patron, who on the basis of his Persian scholarship, got many awards from the Pakistani as well as the Iranian government.

There is also another case of an editor whose books are in fact edited by someone else. He is in a position to employ a number of scholars and use them to enhance his own reputation as a scholar.

The tragedy of the whole phenomenon is that in the beginning this fact is known only by a limited circle, but later on with the passage of time ghost writers are forgotten, and bogus writers are remembered as the real authors.

Here the question arises: why do people want to become writers if they don't have the talent? The answer is simple: everybody wants to prolong his life even after his death. As the written word is sacred, it keeps the name of the writer alive even after his death. Of course, there are a number of other methods to keep your name alive such as building of memorials, mosques, hospitals, schools and orphanages.

As philanthropists invest their money in social work and the building of institutions; similarly a rich and influential person buys the talent or creativity of others. Just as a building is built by architects, masons and labourers but it is known by the name of the person who spent the money; so why should we condemn someone who uses his name after purchasing the talent of some other writer?

Man's ingenuity is remarkable; he finds logic in every illogical thing; this is simply an exploitation of talents in which a writer is compelled to sell his work under financial constraint. However,. such writings are generally of a mediocre level and seldom rank high in

2. One of the characteristics of human history was its cultural progress. Human societies continuously changed. The main motivation for progress was the desire of man to improve his material conditions. Most of Enlightenment's philosophers regarded change as inevitable; but some thought it as something to hope for.
3. Progress ecnompassed not only technological development but all aspects of human life including politics, economics, morality, and religious beliefs. To understand this change, history was divided into different periods. The Europeans regarded themselves in a more advanced stage than other nations. However, It was believed that even primitive societies were capable of passing through different stages and could ultimately reach an advanced stage.
4. In the process of progress, human nature enlightened itself by eliminating ignorance, passions and superstitions. As a result, man attained confidence in his power and liberated himself from divine forces.
5. Progess was closely aligned with rational thinking which made man control his environment. By exploiting natural resources, he acquired prosperity and developed a complex society.

Now the question is how far these concepts of enlightenment are relevant to our society; and if not, what are the efforts to bring society closer to them?

To make the movement of the Enlightenment, which changed Europe, relevant to Pakistani society is not an easy task. The first and foremost thing is that our enlightened intellectuals should clarify their minds on most of the issues and liberate themselves from racial, linguistic, sectarian and tribal prejudices. Only then could they be able to promote liberal values.

There is no doubt that the concepts of the Enlightenment have the power to unite the divided nation on the basis of equality and to use the energy and intelligence of those groups who are pushed aside and prevented from taking an active part in the life of society. It is also evident that only by adopting rational thinking can we get rid of superstition and ignorance.

However, one should keep in mind that Pakistani intellectuals cannot apply enlightenment theories as they were used in Europe. They have to formulate their own theories relevant to the problems of our society. In a nutshell, what we require is enlightenment which could lead to the liberation of our society from all forces of domination and destruction.

About the Book

The role of the Sufis, Ulema and intellectuals has been pertinent to the developmet of our society. It has widely influenced social and political aspects of the Sub-Continent. This book attempts to trace the history of Sufis, Ulema & intellectuals and shows that their conservative and regressive outlook kept the people alien to the modern challenges.

FICTION HOUSE
18-Mozang Road, Lahore.